

RAMBLES
IN
GERMANY AND ITALY,
IN
1840, 1842, AND 1843.

BY
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RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY.

PART III.—1842.

LETTER I.

PRAGUE.

THURSDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1842.

STRANGE and wild legends appertain to Prague, and people the heights that overhang the city. The Bohemians are of Sclavonian race; they were in early times fire-worshippers, and offered victims to their divinity on the Laurenzi Berg, which rises behind the town. On the Hradschin, an eminence that frowns above the Moldau, was built the palace of the old Bohemian kings; and the metropolitan church of Prague stands in the palace-yard, on the highest point of the imperial hill.

The most prosperous period for Prague was the reign of the Emperor Charles IV. He appears in

no favourable light in the pages of Italian history; but he won immortal and deserved renown as King of Bohemia, by his acts of magnificence, and the liberality and sagacity of his government. He caused the Neustadt to be built, marking the width and termination of the streets, and leaving the spaces to be filled up by private individuals, on whom great privileges were bestowed: the size of the streets and open areas interspersed, give it a noble distinction among the ill-built towns of the middle ages. Churches and convents rose around. He built also the grand old Bridge, which spans the broad and curved stream of the Moldau, and he founded the University, which long vied with Paris and Oxford in celebrity.

The earliest Reformers sprung up in Prague. John Huss was rector of the University: his tenets were the source of that independent and Protestant spirit which then first began to undermine the Roman Catholic faith. In early times, the Church of Bohemia obtained from the Council of Basle, that the sacramental cup should be administered to the laity; and this of itself was a broad distinction between Catholic Bohemia and the rest of the Papal world.

Although John Huss died at the stake, his influence continued high in his country, where he was revered as a saint. The Bohemians, loving

their own language and their own customs—a sagacious and intelligent race—were well pleased with any state of things that should conduce to separate them more widely from the surrounding German nations.

The time came when they were to fall. When the rest of Europe was in darkness and enslaved, Bohemia had a pure religion and free institutions: now it is but a province of Austria, and there are not one hundred Protestants in the country. The Emperor Mathias first endeavoured to uproot its liberty, and the Jesuits had been established, to counter-balance, by their insidious system of encroachment, the influence openly possessed by the Protestants. This state of things could not last. The Emperor supported Catholicism, and wished to assimilate Bohemia to his Austrian provinces in language, laws and religion: the national Diet endeavoured to preserve their country as a distinct kingdom. The Emperor insisted on naming his successor, in the person of his brother Ferdinand: the crown had hitherto been elective, and the nobles resolved to preserve their rights. On the death of Mathias, they called to the throne the Elector Palatine, a Calvinist: the Emperor Ferdinand claimed the country as his own, and invaded it.

For one year, Elizabeth of England held a gay and chivalrous court in Prague. Had her husband been

a statesman and a soldier, he might have disciplined his brave, enthusiastic subjects, and have repulsed the invasion of Austria. He was vanquished ingloriously, and, forced to fly from the city, he became a wanderer and an exile. Ferdinand triumphed; but a collision between his pretensions and the free institutions of Bohemia was inevitable. The nobles resisted the Emperor's edicts, and tossed his commissioners out of the windows of the Green Chamber of the palace. This act was the first deed of violence of the thirty years' war, which hence began, nor ended till all Germany was devastated, and Bohemia enslaved.

We set out on a brief drive round the town, to view the spots where these scenes had taken place. Leaving our hotel, we passed through the crowded and trading Altstadt, and crossed the bridge which connects the Klein Seite with the city. On this stands the statue of St. John Nepomuk, who, the legend says, was thrown from that spot into the Moldau below, for refusing to betray to Wenceslaus IV. secrets confided to him by his Queen in the confessional. A constellation of five stars was observed to hover over the water, exciting the curiosity and terror of the pious; so that at last the river was dragged; the body of the saint was found, and received honourable interment—though not canonization until some centuries after. Such is the legend; but the true

history of this saint, as Mr. Reeve* relates it, differs materially, and is curious. He tells us, he perished a martyr to church reform:—"During the contests between Wenceslaus IV. and the then Archbishop of Prague (John of Genzstein, afterwards Patriarch of Alexandria), with regard to certain matters of church property, the prelate was vigorously supported by his Vicar-General, Johanko von Pomuk, upon whom the King wreaked his vengeance; and the spot is still shewn where he was thrown into the river. This event took place in 1381, and was soon forgotten by the people. Time, however, rolled on; John Huss perished in the flames at Constance, and, as his schism was followed by the larger portion of the Bohemian nation, St. John Huss became an object of popular reverence. I have seen hymns in his honour, which were sung in churches even towards the close of the sixteenth century. But when the Jesuits were installed at Prague, to extirpate the Bohemian heresies, they found it useful to have a St. John of their own. The legend of St. John Nepomuk was invented; his relics were shewn; an

* In preparing these letters for the press, I have consulted some papers entitled "Sketches of Bohemia and the Slavonian Provinces of the Austrian Empire," by Henry Reeve, Esq., published in the 18th and 19th vols. of the Metropolitan Magazine. They are admirably written, and it is greatly to be regretted that they do not proceed to a greater length, and are lost in a Magazine.

epic poem, the *Nepomuccidon*, was composed by the Jesuit Percicus in his honour in 1729; he was canonized, and his fame spread with amazing rapidity throughout the Catholic Church. These honours are now so intimately connected with the system in which they originated, that I once heard a distinguished Bohemian declare that no good could befall his country till St. John Nepomuk was once more thrown into the Moldau." Meanwhile, he has become the guardian saint of bridges; his statue, surmounted by the image of the five miraculous stars, in a more or less rude form, finds a place on almost every bridge of Catholic Germany, as it does here on the Bridge of Prague—on the very spot whence he was thrown.

In the Klein Seite the nobles had their palaces, and we saw that of the princely Wallenstein: "coiled as it were round the foot of the imperial rock,"* to make room for which a hundred humbler houses were raised. Wallenstein, who had arrived at mid life in comparative obscurity, first came forward in a conspicuous manner in the Bohemian war. His immense riches were principally derived from the confiscations of the expelled and exiled Hussites. When some years after his command was taken from him, he built this palace, where he lived in princely gran-

* Mr. Reeve.

deur, feeding his imagination with dreams of yet higher glory, ministered to him by Seni the astrologer. It was in early life, during his residence at the University of Padua, that Wallenstein first heard from the Professor Argoli that the stars above echoed the cherished dreams of his own heart. There is no trace, we are told, that Wallenstein ever followed any particular directions emanating from the stars*; but the knowledge that they predicted greatness biased his imagination, strengthened his resolutions, and made him boldly enter on a career from which a man of lowlier hopes had shrunk.

The stars foretold greatness to Wallenstein; did they foretell, obscurely, so that he could not decipher their true meaning, that he should obtain that, the want of which made Alexander weep—a poet to illustrate his deeds? This greatness was perhaps written in the starry scroll, whose real meaning he could not decipher, and so aimed at a success that ended in defeat, but which, by means of Schiller, has become immortal glory. Such lights as well as shadows lure us on under the form of regarded or despised presentiments.

“ I would not call them
Voices of warning that announce to us
Only the inevitable.”

* Life of Wallenstein by Colonel Mitchell.

Wallenstein has been peculiarly fortunate in having two poets; for Coleridge's translation of Schiller's tragedy, giving the German poetry an English poetic form, causes him to belong to both countries.

Dark shadows for centuries have obscured the name of Wallenstein; amidst the uncertain there is enough of certain to form a hero both in good and ill; but the chief good, which places him side by side with his illustrious rival, Gustavus Adolphus, was his religious toleration, in an age of bitter, cruel, unrelenting religious persecution.

Passing this extensive palace, we ascended the height on which the Hradschin is situated; old princely Prague, the native city of the savage Ziska, of the martyred Huss, and of generations of resolute, free, and noble citizens, lay beneath in sleepy decay. It is impossible not to ponder upon the world's fate. Had the Prince Palatine been a hero; had Wallenstein, by birth a Bohemian, not fallen in his youth into the hands of the Jesuits; had he grown up as he was baptized, a Lutheran, would not Bohemia have been able to maintain its political and religious liberty? Would not the thirty years' war have been crushed in the egg? would not Germany, which has never recovered the devastation and massacres of that period, have continued flourishing and become free?

and might the Huguenots, so supported, not have been quite crushed in France.

But Frederick was an empty coward, Wallenstein a pupil of the Jesuits, and the world is as it is.

Our coachman went a little out of his way up the river, to shew us where a suspension bridge is hung across the Moldau; but disdaining the modern invention, we caused the horses' heads to be turned, and recrossed the bridge of St. John Nepomuk, that we might view the traces of the bombardment of the gate by the Swedes; the defaced ornaments and battered appearance still recall that time. I was very sorry to see no more, but though thus an outside view was all I caught of this picturesque and ancient city,—its mosque-like churches, the dark pile of the old royal palace, its deserted mansions, and noble river, form a living scene in my memory never to be effaced. “The day we come to a place which we have long heard and read of, is an era in our lives; from that moment the very name calls up a picture.”* The stilly evening shed golden rays over dome, tower, and minaret, and brightened the wide waters of the river. I returned with regret to our hotel.

* Rogers's “Italy.”

LETTER II.

Mülchen.—Budweis.—Linz.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 2.

WE hired a *lohn-kutscher* to take us to Budweis—about sixty miles—which was to occupy two days: for this we are to pay, including *drink-gelt*, forty-four florins. I ought to mention, that the coachman who took us from Dresden to Prague, refunded the overcharge of two thalers made by the fellow employed by him to take us through the Saxon Switzerland.

I must tell you that the Germans look down on the *voituriers* as people of the lowest grade of society. One German master at Kissingen, who made the bargain with the man who took us to Leipsic, actually spoke to him with the *er*—the third person singular—than which no greater insult can be imagined. These distinctions are droll, varying as they do in different countries. The Germans do not address each other with the plural *you*, as is our custom: *thou* denotes affection and familiarity. The

common mode of speaking to friends, acquaintances, servants, shopkeepers—to everybody indeed—is the third person plural, *sic*, they: your own dog you treat with the *du*, thou; the dog of your enemy with *er*, or he. The Germans have a habit of staring quite inconceivable—I speak, of course, of the people one chances to meet travelling as we do. For instance, in the common room of an hotel, if a man or woman there have nothing else to do, they will fix their eyes on you, and never take them off for an hour or more. There is nothing rude in their gaze, nothing particularly inquiring, though you suppose it must result from curiosity: perhaps it does; but their eyes follow you with pertinacity, without any change of expression. At Rabenau, and other country places, the little urchins would congregate from the neighbouring cottages, follow us about, up the hills, and beside the waterfall, form a ring and stare. A magic word to get rid of them is very desirable: here it is—ask one of them, “*Was will er?*” “What does *he* want?” The *er* is irresistible—the little wretches feel the insult to their very backbone, and make off at once. That the *kutchers* endure the *er* is astonishing. I could not address them so: for surely it is the excess of inhumanity as well as insolence to use a form of speech that denotes contempt to persons who have never offended you. With

the starers it is otherwise ; they do offend grievously, and one has a full right to get rid of them at almost any cost. I will just add, that except the under-driver who had charge of us during our tour through the Saxon Switzerland, we have not had reason to complain of our German *kutchers*—nor any reason to be pleased : they are quiet to sullenness ; never gave up a point ; and never seemed to care whether we were pleased or not. However, under this sort of sulky apathy there lurked an aptitude for getting into the most violent rage, if their pockets are touched, which was very startling, as compared with the absence of all expression of kindly feeling.

We set out from Prague in the morning, not quite as early as we ought, which disturbed the order of our travelling—a fact difficult to instil into the minds of some travellers,—but in *voiturier* travelling the whole comfort depends on an early departure. It seems that if a certain portion of work, with certain rests, are to occupy the day, it does not much matter how these are portioned out. It is not so ; and experience shows an early departure in the morning and an early arrival in the evening to be the only arrangement that makes this method of travelling at all comfortable. We set out late, and we had a carriage provided, uncomfortable from its extreme smallness : it was, indeed, a mere hack

drotsky, taken from the streets ; one person only could sit outside, and four were exceedingly confined for room inside.

The weather continued fine and warm ; and now in the heart of Bohemia, we looked inquiringly abroad to see how a portion of earth, with a name sounding to our western ears strange and even mysterious, differed from any other. We saw few distinctions—the villages were low-built and dirty ; the towns rather pleasing in their appearance, looking airy, with a large square or market-place in the midst, surrounded by low white houses. Hill and dale surrounded us, consisting of a good deal of pasture ; but the circumstance that chiefly struck us was, that we saw not a trace of the residence of any landed proprietor, no château, no country seat, no park, nor garden. We saw no house which any but a peasant, or in the infrequent towns, that any but one in an under grade of life, could inhabit. I cannot in my ignorance explain either the meaning or results of this state of things. Perhaps it arises from the circumstance, that the domains of the Bohemian nobility are so large that they are rather small tributary states.* The nobles possess ample privileges ; and some among them, who belong to the old native families, are truly patriotic, and devote themselves to the good

* Mr. Reeve.

of their tenants, who are almost their subjects ; but Prince Swarzenberg and Prince Metternich, who are among the richest landed proprietors of the province, are certainly absentees ; and probably the list of such is considerable. However this may be, and whatever may be the cause, we looked out eagerly, as we crawled slowly along, for traces of the habitations of gentry—a race more important often to the prosperity of a country than the nobility—but we saw none.

We expected to sleep at Tabor—our kutchcr had so designed, but our late setting out changed his views. This annoyed us ; and one of our party, familiar with German—of no great use, since the man was a Bohemian—sat by him and gave him *kirch-wasser* and cigars, and used what verbal eloquence he could, to persuade him that we might get on to Tabor. The man drank the *kirch-wasser*, smoked the cigars, and said nothing ; while we hoped, in accordance to the old saying, that silence gave consent. At about ten o'clock we arrived at a miserable-looking village, with a worse-looking inn—such as carters and waggoners might frequent. With difficulty, for the entrance was encumbered and tortuous, we entered the court-yard. We sat in silent despair ; but it was necessary to yield. I was taken up a broken staircase to a barn-looking room,

with a number of beds in it—it was the only sleeping-room. A handsome, proud-looking girl, the daughter of the house, with a hand-maiden under her, began to arrange my bed. The people in the south of Germany are not disinclined, when generous, to give you a clean under sheet ; but the upper one is double and encases the quilt, and this they do not think it necessary to change. I summoned all my German, consisting but of single words ; *schmuzig*, or dirty, applied to the sheet, made the girl angry ; but, on my insisting on having another, she complied with the air of an offended empress. My maid slept in the same room. I never dared ask how my companions passed the night—the beds were taken for them out of my room. However, they got an excellent supper (of which I was too tired to partake) of venison—not a common thing in Bohemia ; for usually we only got a disastrous *huhn* (a fowl), rather drier and tougher than deal chips. The name of this village was Mülchen. Our bill was six florins and a half. I mention these prices ; for they show, as they vary from one end of Germany to another, sometimes the value of money, sometimes the inclination to extort. The *schein* money still continues ; so you will understand that a bill was brought in for more than sixteen florins, which,

multiplying by two and dividing by five, we reduced to the real demand in florins Münz. This sort of currency probably springs from the Austrian money introduced by conquest being of too high value for the poverty of Bohemia, who adhered to their own inferior coin, with a new name.

The people of Bohemia, such as we saw them, are better-looking than the peasantry of those parts of Germany which we had visited ; but there is nothing particularly attractive about them. It is impossible, however, to judge fairly even of the surface of a people whose language one does not understand. The Bohemians do not expect to be understood by strangers, unless they can themselves speak German ; and they are too little conversant with foreigners to take any sort of interest in them. Their manner was abrupt and decided, with a mixture of sullen disdain : dirty enough they are, and very poor. The Bohemians are, indeed, singularly cut off from the rest of the earth. Their language is exclusively their own—not understood beyond the boundary. Except to visit Prague, and one or two of their Baths, no strangers enter their country. From what I can gather, they bear the marks of a conquered people, adhering to the customs and practices of their forefathers, forgotten everywhere else—satisfied with themselves—averse to improvement, which, indeed,

has no avenue by which to reach them—they remember that they were once free, though they have forgotten that they were Protestants.

3D SEPTEMBER.

WE still proceeded, not a little weary—the *drosky* was so very uncomfortable—over hill and dale, and through miserable villages, or now and then a larger town, with its wide square and long range of low houses. We stopped at a better-looking inn than that of Mülchen for our mid-day meal, but fared worse; the only thing they could give us was the unfortunate *huhn*, against which we had made many violent resolutions, and now entered many vain protests; this, and the absence of bread—for I cannot give that name to the sour, black, damp, uncatable substance they brought as such—made our meals very like a Barmecide feast. Nor was the table graced with clean linen; but to this we had become painfully accustomed.

We rolled on. The weather was beautiful; the country was pleasing without being striking.

The day's journey was long; we entered Budweis late, by moonlight. This is a large town; and by this light, there was something singular in the appearance of its extensive market-place, surrounded by arcades. The Goldene Sonne is marked by

Murray as good, and we had no reason to alter this decision. The hostess was a tall, large woman, of resolute and abrupt manners; she spoke German readily, and, uncommon in Germany, served us with expedition, but with an authoritative and condescending manner, which amused us very much.

We inquired, and found that there was no locomotive on the railroad, that it was drawn by horses; that it set out at three in the morning, and that we should reach Linz the next day. We sent to take our places, and made a great mistake in not securing an "exclusive extra" as the Americans call it—a coach and horse all to ourselves, which we might have obtained at a slight extra expense, and we should have been perfectly comfortable. Our five places cost fifteen florins, and we had to pay seven extra for luggage; which, considering the quantity we had, was dear. Our bill at Budweis for supper and beds, and a cup of coffee in the morning, was eleven florins—nearly double the bill at Mülchen, and, compared even with Prague, dear.

SEPTEMBER 4TH.

WE did not go to bed till nearly twelve. We were to rise at two; and at the blast of a trumpet we were awakened. You must know, besides its glass, Prague is famous for the manufacture of brass

wind instruments, and P— bought a trumpet for sixteen florins (thirty-two shillings): to prevent all possibility of any of the party not shaking off slumber at the right moment, he blew a blast which must have astonished all the sleepers in the inn.

We again traversed the ghostly-looking white market-place of Budweis by the light of the unset moon, and took our places in one of the carriages on the railroad. Day soon struggled through the shades of night, quenched the moonbeams, and disclosed the face of earth. I never recollect a more delightful drive than the hundred miles between Budweis and Linz: each hour the scene gains in beauty—from fertile and agreeable, it becomes interesting, then picturesque; and at last it presents a combination of beauty which I never saw equalled. I hurry over the miles, as our carriages were hurried along the railroad, which having an inclination down toward Linz, went very fast—I hurry on, and speak briefly of the ever-varying panorama of distant mountain, wood-clothed upland and fertile plain, all gay in sunshine, which we commanded as we were whirled along the brink of a chain of hills. I never can forget the glorious sunset of that evening. We were on the height of a mountain,

“ At whose verdant feet
A spacious plain, outstretched in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant.” — *

* Paradise Regained.

As we descended towards Linz, the sun dropped low in the heavens. The prospect was extensive ; varied by the lines of wooded hills and majestic mountains, and towering above, on the horizon, was stretched the range of the Salzburg and Styrian Alps. The Danube wound through the varied plain below ; the town of Linz was upon the banks, and a bridge spanned the river ; above, it swept under high precipices—below, it flowed majestically on : its glittering waves were seen afar giving that life and sublimity to the landscape which it never acquires without the addition of ocean, lake, or river—water, in short, in some magnificent form. Golden and crimson, the clouds waited on the sun, now dazzling in brightness ; and now, as that sunk behind the far horizon, stretching away in fainter and fainter hues, reflected by the broad river below. The town of Linz was a point or resting place for the eye, which added much to the harmony and perfection of the landscape. I held my breath to look. My heart had filled to the brim with delight, as, sitting on a rock by the lake of Como, I had watched the sunlight climb the craggy mountains opposite. The effect of this evening—when instead of *up*, I looked *down* on a wide-spread scene of glorious beauty, was different ; yet so poor is language, that I know not how to paint the difference in words. I had never before been

aware of all the awe the spirit feels when we are taken to a mountain top, and behold the earth spread out fair at our feet : nor of the delight a traveller receives when, at the close of a day's travel, he—

“ Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which, to his eye, discovers unawares
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen ; or some renowned metropolis,
With glistening spires and pinnacles adorned,
Which now the *setting* sun gilds with his beams.” *

It was dark when we descended into the town : as we crossed the bridge, the waters of the Danube gleamed beneath the hills. •

We repaired to the hotel of the Goldener Löwe, which we find comfortable and good.

* Milton. Do these lines, in the “ Paradise Lost,” refer in the poet's mind to his first view of Florence ? It seems very probable.

LETTER III.

The Traun.—The Gmunden-see.—Ischl.—St. Wolfgang Lake.—
Salzburg.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5TH.

THE train of the railroad started at two in the afternoon for Gmunden: we thus had a few hours to spare. One of our party climbed the heights above Linz, to feast his eyes on the view which had enchanted me the preceding evening. There is no circumstance in travelling, consequent on my narrow means, that I regret so much, as my being obliged to deny myself hiring a carriage when I arrive at a strange town, and the not being able to drive about everywhere, and see everything. I wandered about the town, and stood long on the bridge, drinking in the beauty of the scene, till the soul became full to the brim with the sense of delight. The river is indeed magnificent; with speed, yet with a vastness that renders speed majestic, it hurries on the course assigned to it by the Creator. Never, never had I so much enjoyed the glory of earth. The Danube gives Linz a superiority over a thou-

sand scenes otherwise of equal beauty. Standing on the bridge, above is a narrow pass, hedged in by high sombre rocks, and the river sweeps, darkening as it goes, beneath the gloomy shadows of the precipices; below, it flows in a mighty stream through a valley of wide expanse, till you lose sight of it at the base of distant mountains. I should liked to have stayed some days at Linz: I grieved also not to be going by steam to Vienna.

Our drive by the railroad to Gmunden was delightful. We had a little carriage to ourselves. Our road lay through a valley watered by a stream, and adorned by woods; it was a sequestered home-felt scene; while the high distant mountains redeemed it from tameness. After the sandy deserts of Prussia, and the burnt-up country round Dresden, the freshness and green of a pastoral valley, the murmur of streams and rivulets, the delightful umbrage of the trees, imparted a sense of peace and amenity that lapped me in Elysium. We changed the train at Lambach, a quiet shady village. We had bargained that we should be allowed to visit the falls of the Traun on our way. It was evening before we reached the spot, and the falls are nearly a mile from the road; we had no guide, but were told we could not miss the way. Our path lay

through a wood, and as twilight deepened we sometimes doubted whether we had not gone astray through the gloom of the thicket. You know that a mile of unknown road, with some suspicion hovering in the mind as to whether you are in the right path, becomes at least three, or rather one feels as if it would never end. We came at last to the brink of the precipice above the river, and descended by steps cut in the rock. We thus reached the lower part of the fall. With some difficulty, it being so late, the Miller was found, and meanwhile we clambered to the points of rock from which the cascade is viewed. It was dim twilight, with the moon quietly moving among the summer clouds, and shedding its silver on the waters. The river winding above through a wooded ravine comes to an abrupt rocky descent, over which it falls with foam and spray. The drought had reduced the supply of water; a portion also is carried off for the purpose of traffic—a wooden canal being constructed to allow the salt barges to ascend and descend the Traun without interruption from the cascade. This canal is on an inclined plain, and it would be very delightful to rush down: we could not, as there was no boat; but for six swanzikers (six eightpences) the sluices were shut and the water, blocked up, turned to feed and augment the fall. The evening hour took from the accuracy of our

view, but added immeasurably to its charm; the mysterious glittering of the spray beneath the moon; the deep shadows of the rocks and trees; the soft air and dashing waters—here was the reward for infinite fatigue and inconvenience; here we grasped an hour which, when the memory of every discomfort has become almost a pleasure, will endure as one of the sweetest in life. Our carriage all the time was waiting for us by the road-side, so we tore ourselves away. We procured a boy with a lantern to guide us on our return through the wood; and, reaching the road, away we sped along the rails. Our moonlit view, as we went, was pregnant with a sense of placid enjoyment, being picturesque but gentle in its features of wood, village, and glimmering stream; while the dark and gloomy Traunstein rose frowning before our path. We reached Gmunden late, and found a very comfortable inn; it had a court in the middle and an open balcony on the different floors, into which a number of cell-like rooms opened. We had a good supper of fish from the lake, and the comfortable promise of a steam-boat at eleven the next morning; so there was no need for anxiety with regard to early rising.

SEPTEMBER 6TH.

WE fared sumptuously this morning on fish and game; our bill was therefore comparatively^e high—thirteen florins; it had been the same at Linz. The cost of the railroad to Gmunden, for which we had a carriage for four to ourselves and a place in one of the *diligences* of the train for my maid, was thirteen florins; we had to pay three extra for our luggage.

But enough of these matters. Now for another scene, which will ever dwell in my memory, coloured by the softest tints, yet sublime—the lake of Gmunden. As the steamer carried us away from the town, which appeared noisy and busy after Bohemia, we might believe that we broke our link with vulgar earth—the waters spread out before us so solitary, so tranquil. The lofty crags of the Traunstein rose on our left—bare, abrupt, and dark—while the sunlight varied its shadows as we moved on; opposite, the lake was bounded by grassy hills, speckled with villages and spires, with here and there a cove, half shut in by precipitous rocks, half accessible through shady thickets, with green sloping sward down to the water's edge. These bays had a sequestered appearance, as if the foot of man had never desecrated their loneliness. By one of those unexplainable impulses of the mind, which spring up spon-

taneously and unlooked for, a sense of the beauty of the Greek mythology was awakened in me, more vivid, more real than I had ever before experienced. As the poet* says, I could, while looking

“ On that pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;”

of dryad hiding among the trees ; of nymph gazing at her own beauty in the lucid wave ; of an immortal race—in short, the innocent offspring of nature, whose existence was love and enjoyment ; who, freed from the primæval curse, might haunt this solitary spot. Why should not such be ? If the earthly scales fell from our eyes, should we not perceive that “ all the regions of nature swarm with spirits, † ” and affirm, with Milton, that—

“ Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.”

It is easier for the imagination to conjure such up in spots untrod by man, so to people with love and gratitude what would otherwise be an unsentient desert. Not that I would throw contempt on the pleasures of the animal creation, nor even on those of tree, or herb, or flower, which merely enjoys a conscious life, and in its pride of beauty feels happy, and, as it decays, peacefully resigns existence. But this does not satisfy us, who are born to look beyond

* Wordsworth.

† Addison.

the grave, and yearn to acquire knowledge of spiritual essences.

I cannot tell you the sacred pleasure with which I brooded over these fancies, which were rather sensations than thoughts, so heartfelt and intimate were they. I scarce dared breathe, and longed to linger on our way, so not so quickly to put from my lips the draughts of happiness which I imbibed.

You may remember that this was the spot that poor Sir Humphry Davy visited during his last painful illness: many hours he beguiled fishing in the streams that fall into the lake. Happy, or in sorrow, I hope to return, and spend a summer in this neighbourhood: joy would be more than doubled, and grief softened into resignation, amidst scenes which, among many beautiful, exercised a power over my imagination I never felt before. How deeply I regret not having spent the season here instead of at Kissingen and Dresden; but last summer in Wales so blended the idea of deluges of rain with mountain scenery, that the search of health, a wish to see some friends, and a longing to behold strange cities, made us prefer the North. Regret is useless now. Shall I ever have a sunny summer, when I may choose at will a retreat? If I have, it will be spent here.

The scenery round the lake increased in wildness

and sublimity as we lost sight of Gmunden. I was very sorry when our one-hour's voyage was over, and we landed at Ebensee. Here a sort of large car waited for the passengers, and we drove up a wooded glen, through which the Traun flowed—a mountain torrent, broken by rocks—to Ischl. This is a fashionable bathing-place: it is situated in a deep valley, surrounded by hills; though beautiful, it had not the charm of the scenes we had just left; indeed, a lake amidst mountains must always exceed a grassy valley: there is a magic charm in the notion of a cot on the verdant, wooded banks of a lonely lake—the boat drawn up in a neighbouring cove—the sheltering mountains gathering around. However, Ischl presents excellent head-quarters for excursions in this neighbourhood.

We here seriously discussed our future progress. A desire to visit an Italian lake, as yet unknown, made us select the Brenner pass and the Lago di Garda for our entrance into the Peninsula. The extreme beauty of the country in which we are, makes us desire to see as much of it as possible; and various names, the lake of Hallstadt and Bad Gastein, hung before, to lure us towards them. But we cannot linger; and, on making inquiries, it seems that, unless we make excursions perfectly independent of our ultimate bourne, we cannot visit these spots,—

in short, that to do so we ought to spend a summer, choosing some head-quarters, from which to diverge in different radii; but that to go to Venice, we must abide by a known and frequented road.

I gave up the idea of a prolonged stay in this neighbourhood with exceeding regret; but when resolved to proceed, many difficulties presented themselves. The people of the hotel at Ishl, which was large, new, clean, and good, but at the moment nearly empty, were resolved that we should spend at least one night there, and neither post-horses with carriage, nor *voituriers*, could be procured,—being a fine day, they declared that every horse had been taken out by various parties of visitors for picnics and excursions. This was a renewal of the scene at Schandau. We ought to have yielded at once, and been satisfied to make an agreement for setting out the following morning; but we were stubborn, and much time was very disagreeably taken up by the struggle; and the dogged obstinacy and rude sullenness of the people exasperated some among us very much. They had the best of it however, and we were forced to resign ourselves to remain the night: a change then came, almost magical; the people, late so rude, were all courtesy; and sullenness turned into obligingness. Nor were

they bent on extortion : our bill altogether was seventeen florins.

Being now at peace in our minds, we wandered for some time beside the Ishl. If we had been transported suddenly to this spot, we had been enchanted ; but we had passed through more beautiful scenery to reach it. There were a good many visitors : among them, Maria Louisa, a woman who might have been respected among women ; but she forfeited her privilege.

• SEPTEMBER 27.

THE drive from Ishl to Salzburg was delightful. The road, for a considerable space, bordered the St. Wolfgang Lake. At the head of the lake, the horses rested for an hour ; and my friends took a boat, and went on it to bathe. I joined them afterwards. There was not the same charm in this lake as in the Gmunden-see. I cannot tell you why ; for I find no language to express differences which are immense to our perceptions, and yet vary little in the description. Both present a wide expanse of water, surrounded by precipitous mountains or grassy banks. This, too, was grand, and solitary, and beautiful, but less softly inviting—less, as it were, holy in its calm, and, at the same time, less cheerful in its aspect—than the Gmunden-see.

What will you say to me when I say that Salzburg surpassed all? It has indeed been pronounced to be the most beautiful spot in Germany. Wherefore? It has not the majestic Danube, as at Linz, sweeping under dark, overhanging cliffs, and winding through a spacious valley, till lost to sight beneath distant mountains: it has not a lake sheltered by hills, with bay and inlet sacred to the sprites. It is observed that one of the most admirable features of a scene is where lofty mountains and an extensive plain unite. This is rare: usually mountains inclose a ravine, or valley, or lake: and the scenery around Salzburg is a specimen on the grandest scale in the world of this mixture.

Imagine a vast, fertile, various plain, half-encircled by mighty mountains—those near the town are abrupt cliffs, which tower above, crowned by castle and convent—with a river sweeping round their base; others, high and picturesque, but of softer forms, and wooded; and then, high above all, craggy, gigantic Alps—not the highest, for at this summer season scarcely a north-turned peak has preserved its snow, but still stupendous—some showing their dark, beetling sides, like Cader Idris, but on a larger scale; others, with what in Switzerland are called *aiguilles*, their spire-like peaks seeking the upper skies. Remember, we saw all this beneath a bright

sun, the air so dry and pure that every crag and cleft was distinct on the face of the hills at an immense distance. The plain itself has a richer and more cheerful and rural appearance than any I have seen since I left England. The beauty of its meadows and gardens, the frequency of its country-houses, the indescribable variety of the landscape, enchant the eye. What a summer might here be spent!—what a life, I would say, had not society and home a claim;—were it not a dream that we can be happy only in the contemplation of nature, removed from all intercourse with our equals. But you see the magic circle: Linz, Gmunden, Ischl—these are in Styria—then the district called the Salzkammergut. Such is the region in which I design, if I am ever able, to pass some long months, and to enjoy even more than I have ever yet done, the delight of exploring scenery unrivalled in the world. Yes; though the thought of Italy reproaches, and for *life*, I should not hesitate to choose between the two; yet there is something more sublime, more grand, more mysterious, in this Alpine region; which, as far as I have seen, I infinitely prefer to Switzerland.

As we approached Salzburg, we found the fields and green uplands near the town alive with people. Horse-racing was going on; and the whole population had poured out to see it, reproaching our dusty

carriage and our fatigue by the gaiety of the equipages and the holiday trim of the spectators. I do not know anything more humbling to one's self-conceit than arriving travel-tired and soiled amidst a crowd of well-dressed people; so we looked another way, and went right on to the inn. We found that the inauguration of the statue of Mozart and the anniversary of the century after his birth had been celebrated by three days of holiday at Salzburg—this, the last. It was a great pity we had not arrived the day before to hear one of his Operas; but we were too late. As a token of veneration for this greatest of all composers, Mr. P—— endeavoured to gain admission to the organ on which Mozart had played for years; but the absence of the person in authority prevented his success.

The inn of the Erzherzog Carl is very good; but our duties pressed on us. We could not linger, and we must make arrangements for our further progress. We ascertained here a fact, which we suspected before, that the addition which our party had received at Dresden, however delightful in other respects, spoiled the financial economy of our journey. Persons travelling in Austria without a carriage can, if four in number, secure a *separat wagen*, and obtain a clean carriage to convey them

post the whole way, at a slight advance on the price of the *eilwagen* ; but we were five—we must, therefore, have two carriages, and the expense was doubled. We did not find a *voiturier* much cheaper. Had we gone post, we should have gone by Villach, and reached Venice in four or five days. But we had set our hearts on the Lago di Garda, and that decided us. We made a bargain for two *calèches*, with a pair of horses to each, to take us over the Brenner to Trent, in five days and a half, for a hundred and forty florins.* We have now left the Münz and schein money, and have passed from the Austrian to the Bavarian florin : this is a gain—the former is two shillings, the latter two francs ; and they are worth the same in expenditure. Settling this affair occupied us, at intervals, during the whole evening. We rambled a little about the town, which is remarkable for a large handsome square, with a fountain, built of white marble, and said to be the finest in Europe : it would be finer had it more

* On this subject only Murray's Hand-book seems to run faulty—a lower price for *voiture* travelling is always named than I have found it possible to attain. It is easy to allege that we were imposed upon. It may be so ; but it was difficult to believe this in some instances, where the bargain was made for us by friends, natives of the country. In the Hand-book of Italy this is the more remarkable, and I can speak with greater certainty. I do not know how it may be with a single man taking his place,—one among many, as it may chance,—but for a party, like ourselves, taking a whole carriage, the expense in proportion is far higher than he mentions.

water. The statue of Mozart is placed in another part of the square : it is of a large size, and striking. On account of the festival, there was no possibility of visiting the *lions*—every body was out. and all things closed. We wandered beyond the town, on the margin of the Salzer—an impetuous torrent, rushing at the foot of romantic crags. It is a region of enchanting beauty, which I shall leave with great regret. Still, it is much to have had this sort of *flash-of-lightning* view of the lovely scenes we have lately passed through ; and I hope, some day, to visit them again at leisure.

LETTER IV.

Entrance to the Tyrol.—Village Fête.—Pass Strub.—Swartz.—
Inspruck.

MONDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER.

WE left Salzburg at ten o'clock, on a fine sunny morning. We were about to penetrate the most celebrated passes of the Tyrol,—and the name has magic in it. We wound through the plain of the Salzammergut, hedged in by lofty mountains, that rise sheer and abrupt from the plain, without any apparent opening by which their recesses may be penetrated. The Tyrol is the most continuously mountainous district in Europe. Switzerland contains plains and lakes—the Tyrol has only defiles and ravines, hedged in closely on all sides by precipice and mountain; while, in the depths, the torrents from the hills unite and form rivers, which turn many a mill-wheel destined for domestic use, besides carrying the riches of the country (salt) down various canals, fed by them, till it reaches the Danube. Once, these streams were laden with the hopes—the fate—of the Tyrolese, and watched with

beating hearts by the heroes about to combat for their country—by the women and children who sympathised with and aided the stronger sex in their glorious struggle. The night of the 8th April, 1809, was fixed on for the general rising of the peasantry against the French and Bavarians: the signal agreed upon was throwing sawdust into the Inn, which floated down, and was seen and understood by the peasants. In addition to this, a plank with a little pennon was launched on the river and borne down the stream, and hailed with enthusiasm, as it carried the tidings that all were about to rise to liberate their country.

It is by these defiles—that of the Saal—and afterwards of the Inn—that travellers^{*} reach the Brenner. We approached the mighty crags, and by degrees they closed around us, and we found ourselves in a ravine, with the Saal—a common name of a river in Germany—flowing through its depth. This sort of route is familiar to all who have travelled among mountains. Thus are these districts traversed. The chains of mountains are intersected by ravines, and torrents work their way in the depth; the road is carried along the margin—now ascending, now descending, now turning the huge shoulder of a hill, now penetrating into its recesses, according as the formation of the pass requires.

Soon after leaving Salzburg, we came upon a strip of Bavarian territory; and it was necessary to stop at the last Austrian Custom-house, to have our luggage loaded. While this was being done, the sounds of a fiddle caused us to peep into the public room of a little inn. A marriage was being celebrated, and dancing going on. A curious sight it was. The men are a handsome race, dressed as we are accustomed to see them represented—the jacket, tight breeches fastened at the knee, the sash round the waist, stockings and shoes, and high hat and feather, form a very becoming costume for a good figure. But, alas! for the women: their waists are placed up between their shoulders; their petticoats, short; a peaked man's hat, like a Welchwoman's, completes their ungainly appearance. Nor did I see any beauty: the youngest were weather-beaten and clumsy: they were destitute of all soft feminine grace, and seemed a cross between a boy and an old woman. The dancing is infinitely strange. They *waltz* with impetuosity—with frenzy—interspersing their dance with certain capers, twists, hugs and leaps, which evidently excited great admiration: a Highland fling was nothing to it. We found Murray's description true to the letter, and were much amused. Remember, too, that amidst all the twirlings, springs, and kickings, in which they indulged, the dance was performed with a gravity

worthy of a Parisian ball-room, and with infinite precision; no jostling; no romping; their capers were executed by rule, and with perfect decorum.

The pass we continued to penetrate—*Pass Strub*, which forms the portal of the Tyrol—is one of the most beautiful in the world. We left the Saal; and now crossing the huge shoulders of mighty hills, now thridding other deep gorges, we wound our tortuous way, till we should reach the Unter Innthal, or valley of the lower Inn. This night we slept at Waidringen, a very rustic place; but we were comfortable enough. Our fare was wild food: we had supper, our rooms, and coffee in the morning; and our bill amounted to four Bavarian florins, for five persons.

SEPTEMBER 9.

THE Tyrol was ever celebrated for the beauty of its scenery, and the integrity and simplicity of its inhabitants. In 1780, Mr. Beckford travelled here, and celebrates, in various of his inimitable Letters, “the Tyrol, a country of picturesque wonders.” “Here,” he says, “those lofty peaks, those steepes of wood I delight in, lay before us. Innumerable clear springs gushed out on every side, overhung by luxuriant shrubs in blossom; soft blue vapours rest upon the hills, above which rise mountains that bear plains of snow into the clouds.”

The Tyrol is now endowed with a higher interest : it is hallowed by a glorious struggle, which gifts every rock, and precipice, and mountain-stream, with a tale of wonder.

The Tyrol became by inheritance a possession of the house of Hapsburgh as far back as the fourteenth century. The princes of Austria showed themselves worthy sovereigns of this province. The internal government of the country was the object of wise legislation ; and, in spite of the opposition of Pope and noble, and imperial city, the Tyrolese received the gift of a free constitution, and governed and taxed themselves. These blessings are guarded by the fact that the soil of the mountains is their own. There are no noble landlords to carry off the wealth of the country in the shape of rents, forcing the labourers to waste their lives in penury and toil, that they may squander in vice and luxury. The peasant possesses the land he cultivates. He is independent, pious, and honest. No mercenary troops have ever been hired among these mountains ; but the Tyrolese are not unwarlike. They are devotedly attached to the House of Austria, which conferred their privileges, protected them, exacted few taxes, and in no way displayed the cloven foot of despotism, in this happy region. Their domestic government is carried on by themselves. They furnish a slight contingent to the

imperial armies, which is looked upon as an opening to active life, and operates rather beneficially on the population. They are accustomed to the use of arms, for the militia is called out and exercised each year. They are a happy, brave, religious, free, and virtuous people.

But what is all this to ambition? It suited the views of Napoleon that the Tyrol should belong to Bavaria, when he raised it from an electorate to a kingdom; and by the treaty of Presburg in 1805, Austria ceded, with reluctance it is true, but still it ceded, the best jewel of its crown. The Tyrolese had lately, under the command of the Austrians, defended their passes against the Bavarians with heroic bravery—now they were to become subjects of the inimical power.

Their very hearts revolted against their change of masters. But they had far worse to suffer. Their new sovereign promised solemnly to govern them by their old laws, and to respect their institutions; but no sooner were the Bavarian authorities established in the country, than these stipulations were basely violated. The constitution was at once overthrown by a royal edict. Hitherto they had taxed themselves; now eight new and oppressive taxes were imposed and levied with rigour. Convents and monasteries were confiscated, their estates sold, and their

chalices and other sacred treasures seized, melted down, carried off. Not content with inflicting these wrongs and insults, Bavaria attempted to obliterate the very name of the Tyrol from the map of Europe. The district was divided into provinces, called after the various rivers which flowed through them. The inhabitants were ordered to change their language, and only permitted to use that of their forefathers for four more years.

Napoleon, when the country rose against this misrule, declared "the Bavarians did not know how to govern the Tyrolese, and were unworthy to reign over that noble country." But these words only add greater heinousness to his crimes against them; for his exactions on Bavaria were the primal cause of the heavy taxes—his example had taught that the best way to tame a people was to give them new names, and change their local demarcations; and when they revolted against the tyranny which he himself declared unworthy, he punished without mercy the oppressed, wronged, and insulted insurgents.

What wonder that the Tyrolese detested their new rulers; or that, fondly attached to their old ones, they should hear and answer with enthusiasm the call of one of their ancient princes. When war again broke out between France and Austria, the

Archduke John called on the Tyrolese, in a spirited and exciting proclamation, to expel the French and Bavarians. With transport they prepared to obey. The country rose to a man: women and children assisted; carrying to the scattered peasantry the watchword, "*s'ist zeit*," "it is time," which bade them at once assemble and prepare for action. Slightly aided by the Austrian regular troops, at the cost of many victories and some defeats, they drove the enemy from their country.

But peace was again to prove fatal to them. By the treaty that was signed after the battle of Wagram, they were ceded anew to Bavaria. What wonder that they shrunk from the hated yoke, whose weight they had before experienced, and almost without hope, yet resolved not to yield. They continued the heroic struggle; and in this last contest, their combats and their victories were even more wonderful than in the first instance.

Every portion of the route we traversed had been the scene of victory or defeat, and rendered illustrious by the struggle for liberty. Our road lay through Unter Innthal, which presented mountain scenery, infinitely various in aspect;—glens, wood, and stream;—sunrise, noon, and sunset—shine and shadow added perpetual changes to the ravines and their skreens of precipices. I confess there was

none of the charm of Styria or the Salzkammergut. It was beautiful and sublime to pass through, to look upon, but the wish to take up my abode in any of these solitudes never presented itself to my mind. I have even seen passes I have admired more; it bears some resemblance to that of Saint Jean le Maurienne, for instance, on the way from Chablais to Mont Cenis; but that is more beautiful from its walnut-trees and loftier Alps.

We slept at Swartz—a town of sad celebrity in the wars of 1809. The Bavarians took it by storm, and were guilty of cruelties which the historian refuses to depict, as too horrible and too sickening for his pages.* A new race has sprung up; but the town has not recovered its former prosperity.

The inn here is excellent; it is kept by Rainer, known in England as one of the Tyrolese minstrels. His rooms are clean and comfortable; we fared sumptuously, indulging in Rhenish wine. Our bill, with all this, was only ten florins, or thirteen shillings and fourpence, for all; by which you may judge for how small a sum a man alone, bent on economy, might make a tour of the Tyrol.

Leaving Swartz, by degrees the pass widened, and from a height we saw Inspruck, white and nest-like, basking in the valley beneath. All this portion of

* Alison's History of Europe.

the country was the theatre of many mortal combats between the Tyrolese and Bavarians and French, in 1809. The town was taken and retaken several times ; the bridge of Hall, the Brenner, and Berg Isel, were the scenes of gallant exploits ; and the rustic chiefs of these hardy mountaineers were often victorious over officers, who, commanding disciplined troops, disdained the ill-armed and tumultuous peasantry with whom they had to contend. Dietfurth, a Bavarian colonel, had boasted at Munich that, "with his regiment and two squadrons of horse, he would disperse the ragged mob." He was wounded to death in one of the assaults, when Inspruck was taken ; and while lying in the guard-house of that city, singularly added to the enthusiasm of the pious, not to say superstitious, peasantry. He asked, Who had been their leader ? "No one," was the reply ; "we fought equally for God, the Emperor, and our native country." "That is surprising," said Dietfurth ; "for I saw him frequently pass me on a white horse." These words caused the report to spread that their patron saint, St. James, frequently celebrated in Spanish annals of Moorish wars for his white charger, had appeared in person to guard the city, placed under his especial protection.

Besides this more modern source of interest, we were told to look with curiosity at an old castle,

from a high window of which Wallenstein, then a page of the Margraf of Burgau, fell to the ground without hurting himself—an accident which was said to have sown in his mind the seeds of that superstitious reverence for his own fortune which followed him through life, and was the instigator of many of his exploits. Unfortunately for the fame of the castle, Wallenstein's biographers tell us that this story is a fiction ; that he was never page to the said nobleman ; never inhabited this castle.

Insruck, lying in the centre of a little plain, surrounded by Alps, with its tall steeple and white walls, has a thousand times been painted, and is a sort of ideal of what these Alpine cities are. It is clean and fair ; one wide well-paved street, which midway enlarges into a square, runs the whole length. There is an immense hotel, usually thronged with travellers, as the road into Italy by Munich, and by the passes of the Tyrol or the Stelvio, is much frequented. We had a very good breakfast here, for which we paid as much as for supper, rooms, and breakfast the night before ; the numerous English have taught them high charges. Here we found some letters from England, and wrote answers, and rambled about, but saw not half of what we ought to have seen in this capital of a free country.

LETTER V.

The Pass of the Brenner.—Hofer.—Bressanone.—Egra.—Trent.—
Riva.—Lago di Garda.—Promontory of Sirmio.

IMMEDIATELY on leaving Inspruck we began the ascent of the Brenner. The road is being greatly improved; as long as we continued along the new portion, it was admirable, but we were forced to turn off very soon into the old road, now in a neglected state. The northern side of the Brenner is very dreary. For awhile we commanded a view of the plain of Inspruck, and its gem-like town; but when a turn of the road hid this, we found ourselves winding along beside a tiny rill, and spread around was a wild and dreary mountain side: a drizzling rain fell, which shut out the view of the surrounding country. The people we met looked poor, and the villages through which we passed seemed wretched enough. In one of them we passed the night. The name of the village is not even mentioned in Murray, and the inn was very bad; so you may think we were disgusted—especially as we had entertained

hopes of getting on as far as Brenner : but the elder *voiturier*, who was captain of our movements, was silent, sulky, and obstinate. Endeavours to move him, only added to his sullenness.

The road in the morning presented the same disconsolate appearance : the town of Brenner is on a level, shut in by heights. We were still on the banks of the Sill, which joins the Inn, and pursues its course to the Black Sea ; but with delight I saw, and with ecstacy my two companions, who had never visited Italy, hailed, a little rivulet and tiny waterfall, the Eisach, which flows south and joins the Adige ; it was grasping Italy, to behold a stream that mingled its mountain-born waters with the rivers and lakes of that divine country.

We descended rapidly ; and, passing across the Sterzinger Moss, a marshy flat, we again entered the mountain defiles. After passing through Mittenwald, the ravine closes still more narrowly. This was the scene of a most tremendous conflict during the Tyrolese struggle. Every stone and every crag, indeed, has its tale of victory and defeat.

I have mentioned, that after the battle of Aspern, the Tyrolese had delivered their country from the Bavarian yoke. The desire to be free caught the neighbouring provinces of Bavaria, Vorarlberg, and the northern Italian mountains, and in every part

the native peasantry, joined to their Austrian allies, were victorious. The Tyrolese believed that they had regained their liberty, when the battle of Wagram, followed by the armistice of Znaym, crushed all their hopes. The Tyrol was re-demanded by Napoleon for Bavaria—and ceded again by Austria. The Emperor, after vowing never to desert them, wrote to the Tyrolese to announce, with expressions of paternal regret, the necessity he was under of yielding to Napoleon, and to order his troops to evacuate their country.

The mountaineers received these tidings with indignation, but without despair. They had struggled, bled, and been victorious ; but battles in which they had no share, fought at a distance from their territory, were to decide their fate ; and they were to be made over like a flock of sheep, bought and paid for, to a master who had oppressed them and endeavoured to destroy all they held dear—constitution, name, language, all ! They refused to submit to so inglorious a destiny. At first they deliberated on forcing the Austrian troops to remain ; but deserted by them, and by many of their own leaders, who accompanied the retiring army, they turned to Hofer, who accepted the command. The whole of the Tyrol again rose, and many of the Austrian soldiers deserted their banners to join the peasantry. The hopes of the

patriots were now high, and they resolved to close their passes against the French and the Bavarians.

Hofer is no silken hero. Many portions of his character militate against the laws of romance; he had the German defects joined to their nobler qualities. He was born in the station of an innkeeper, a position rather of distinction in the Tyrol, since bringing the publican into contact with travellers, he acquires knowledge and civilisation. He is said to have been indolent, as well as convivial, even to intemperance, in his habits. He was often to be found carousing in a way-side inn, while his companions in arms were in the field. With all this, his countrymen idolised him, and he was esteemed and distinguished by the Emperor and the Arch-duke John, who was the chief instigator of the first rising of the Tyrol. He was possessed of unblemished integrity — honest, brave, open-hearted, resolute, and pious, he had all the virtues of the hardy, untaught mountaineer.

It is an interesting circumstance in his career, that when called upon to lead his countrymen against the Bavarians, he underwent a violent struggle of feeling. When General Hormayr withdrew from the Tyrol, he persuaded several of the chiefs to accompany him in his retreat. Hofer refused to go, and exerted his eloquence to prevail on his

friends to remain, imploring them to make "one more effort in behalf of their beloved country." Yet his own resolution was not entire. He felt that he was about to lead his countrymen against forces which held the whole of Europe in awe, which had humbled that Emperor, under the protection of whose sceptre he desired to remain. Could anything but ultimate defeat ensue? On the other hand, he could not contemplate with any sense of resignation a renewal of the tyranny of Bavaria: and, doubtless, he entertained a hope that their continued resistance would cause Austria to make another, and probably a successful attempt to claim its own. He passed several days in his native valley of Passeyr, a prey to irresolution, striving to seek a decision by the force of prayer.

Meanwhile, General Lefevre, at the head of a force composed of French, Saxons, and Bavarians, penetrated to Inspruck, took possession of the city, and advanced southward across the Brenner. The peasantry assembled in arms, and Hofer not appearing, Haspinger came forward to lead them. Father Haspinger was a Capuchin friar; he was young and athletic. In his student days, in 1805, he had fought the French; since then he had lived secluded in his monastery; but the cause of his country called him out. He had been present at

all the previous battles, and was always seen in the thickest of the fight, bearing no arms except a large ebony crucifix, with which he dealt tremendous blows on the heads of his adversaries, and did great execution. In the absence of Hofer, this singular man came forward to direct the exertions of the peasantry. It was in the narrow pass below Mittenvald, that he prepared a fearful ambush. He caused enormous larch-trees to be felled, upon which were piled huge masses of rock and heaps of rubbish; the whole being held together by strong cords, and thus suspended over the edge of the precipice.

“We had penetrated to Inspruck,” writes a Saxon officer, belonging to Lefevre’s army, “without great resistance; and, although much was reported about the Tyrolese stationed upon and round the Brenner, we gave little credit to it, thinking the rebels might be dispersed by a short cannonade, and already looking on ourselves as conquerors. Our entrance into the passes of the Brenner was only opposed by small corps, which continued to fall back after an obstinate but short resistance: among others, I perceived a man, full eighty years of age, posted against the side of a rock, and sending death among our ranks at every shot. Upon the Bavarians descending from behind to make him prisoner, he shouted aloud, ‘*Hurrah!*’ struck the first man to

the ground with a ball, seized the second, and, with the cry, '*In God's name!*' precipitated himself with him into the abyss below. Marching onward, we heard from the summit of a high rock, '*Stephen, shall I chop it off yet?*' to which a loud, '*Nay!*' reverberated from the other side. This was told to the Duke of Dantzic, who, notwithstanding, ordered us to advance. The van, consisting of 4000 Bavarians, had just stormed a deep ravine, when we again heard over our heads, '*Hans! for the Most Holy Trinity!*' The reply that immediately followed completed our terror. '*In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, cut all loose above!*' and ere a minute had elapsed, thousands of my comrades in arms were crushed, buried, and overwhelmed by an incredible heap of broken rock, crags, and trees, hurled down upon us."

Mr. Alison, in his "History of Europe," tells us that in 1816 he visited this spot, and says "the long black furrow, produced by the falling masses, like the track of an avalanche, was, even then, after the lapse of seven years, imperfectly obliterated by the bursting vegetation which the warmth of the Italian sun had awakened on these beautiful steeps." Now, thirty-three years, with their various seasons, snow, rain, and sunshine, have drawn a green veil over the ruins; and there is nothing left to tell the tale of defeat and death.

To return to Hofer—for these valleys are filled with his name, and it were sacrilege to traverse them without commemorating his glory and lamenting his downfall.

On hearing of this success, Hofer, joined by many thousand peasants, descended from the valley of Passeyr; through the whole region the hardy inhabitants rose *en masse*. Count Wittgenstein succeeded, however, in clearing the northern slope of the Brenner, and General Lefevre once more advanced, intending to cross and enter the Italian Tyrol. He was attacked on all sides by innumerable and determined foes. After an obstinate conflict he was defeated, forced back down the mountain; he lost his ammunition and cannon, and, hotly pursued, had only time to take refuge in Inspruck, disguised like a common trooper.

The peasantry collected in thousands, and another battle ensued. The disciplined troops of the invader were unable to cope with the enthusiastic numbers that assailed them; their mercenary courage quailed before the noble ardour of the free mountaineers. Mount Isel was again the scene of the conflict; it ended in the total defeat of the French and Bavarians. Inspruck was evacuated, and General Lefevre retreated to Salzburg. Hofer became commander-in-chief of the Tyrol. The simplicity,

the almost childish earnestness to act with justice that characterised his rule, in no way deteriorates from the real elevation of his character. He was an ignorant peasant, and his eyes did not look beyond the well-being of his native province and of his countrymen, who were also his personal friends. To this he was devoted, and no act of arbitrary power or of insolence, no shadow of such a thing, clouded his short-lived prosperity.

It was indeed brief. New armies poured into the devoted country, and the mountain passes were invaded at all points. For three months the peasants kept up their resistance, but the coming of winter forced them from their mountain fastnesses into the valleys below; food became scarce; their power of resisting the foe dwindled, faded, and became extinct—the Tyrol again became a province of Bavaria.

Napoleon, in his haughty contempt and insolent indignation at any opposition to his will, chose to regard the struggle of the Tyrolese for liberty as the lawless tumult of freebooters; he magnified the very few acts of barbarity of which the peasantry had been guilty (not to be compared in number to the atrocities perpetrated by their opponents) and had the baseness to set a price on the head of the peasant chiefs.

Hofer wavered several times. Now, conceiving that further resistance could only injure his country, he issued a proclamation inviting his countrymen to lay down their arms; but finding they would not yield, he resolved not to desert his post, and told the peasantry that "he would fight with them and for them, as a father for his children." Various feats of arms ensued, and the Tyrolese were often victorious—even while ultimate and absolute defeat could only be deferred a few days by their heroism. At last all was lost; the chiefs for the most part fled; some fell into the hands of the enemy; others, with more or less of peril and hardship, escaped to Austria.

Hofer refused to fly; he refused to surrender. He retired to his native valley of Passeyr. He concealed himself in an Alpine hut four leagues distant from his home, and almost inaccessible amidst the snows. His wife and child accompanied him, and his friends supplied him as they could with food, and brought him messages even from the Emperor of Austria, entreating him to escape. He refused. A stubborn patriotism held him to his native mountains, and he declared he would never leave them. Nor would he disguise himself, nor cut off his beard, which, flowing to his waist, rendered him conspicuous. At the same time he probably believed, now

the country was subdued and tranquil, that the French would soon cease to desire to possess themselves of him.

He was deceived. A cunning intriguing priest, of the name of Donay, had insinuated himself into his confidence, and now, for the sake of the price set upon his head, betrayed him to the French general. An officer was sent with sixteen hundred men to take him prisoner; two thousand more were ordered up the pass to be at hand—so fearful were they that the peasants would rise to the rescue.

The column began their march at midnight, on the 20th January, over ice and snow. At five in the morning they reached the hut in which Hofer and his family harboured. He heard the French officer inquire for him, and came to the door and at once delivered himself up. He was bound, and amidst the shouts of the French and the tears of the peasants, he was marched to Botzen. Here he was received by the French commandant, Baraguay d'Hilliers, who treated him with courtesy, and even with such kindness as may be afforded a prisoner. Hofer was greatly altered by his long retreat amidst the snows, and by frequent want of food. His hair had grown gray, but his spirit was untamed, and his countenance beamed with cheerfulness and serenity. He was separated from his family, and carried to the

shores of the Lago di Garda. He was put in a boat at the little village of Simone, and on disembarking again was carried on to Mantua.

A court-martial was immediately summoned : but even the laws of war were dispensed with ; for the sentence of death was not passed by this court ; the telegraph declared it from Milan, ordering his execution within twenty-four hours. Until this moment he had apprehended no danger to his life ; yet he received the sentence with unshaken firmness, and only requested the attendance of a confessor : this was complied with. On the following morning, he was taken from the prison. He passed by the barracks of the Porta Molina, where the Tyrolese prisoners were confined, who all wept, and implored his blessing. This Hofer gave them, entreating their pardon for being the cause of their misfortunes, and declaring his conviction that they would soon be delivered from the sway of Bavaria. On the broad bastion at a little distance from the Porta Ceresa, a halt was commanded. Hofer refused to be blind-folded—he refused to kneel. He said, “He was accustomed to stand upright before his Creator, and in that posture he would deliver his spirit up to Him.” He said a few words of farewell, expressing his undying love for his country ; and pronounced the word “Fire !” with a firm voice.

The spot on which he fell is still considered sacred by his countrymen.

His funeral was conducted with solemnity by the French. But this was only an act of hypocrisy; such as instigated Berthier, then at Vienna, to declare that Hofer's death would cause great pain to Napoleon, and that he would never have permitted it, had he been aware. Had Hofer suffered by sentence of the court-martial by which he was tried, there had been some colour to this assertion; but the telegraphic dispatch that commanded and hurried his execution, in spite of the milder dealings of the military tribunal, in fear lest the intercession of the Emperor of Austria would prevent it, could only emanate from an authority intimately conversant with, and blindly obedient to, Napoleon's will.

When, after landing from Elba, and losing the battle of Waterloo, Bonaparte was taken prisoner, was he less an outlaw than Hofer, who defended his country against invasion? His want of magnanimity does not excuse that of others, but it takes from the respect, the compassion, and the indignation, with which he demanded that his imprisonment should be regarded. It has been justly pronounced, that Napoleon was not guilty of any acts of wanton cruelty; but the pages of his history are also destitute of any record of his magnanimity.

The Emperor of Austria invited the wife of Hofer to Vienna. She refused to quit her native mountains; and resided, till her death, under her husband's roof, in the Valley of Passeyr.

Such are the deeds, such the name, that shed glory over the rugged and romantic passes of the Tyrol. We continued to thread them; and the interest with which we regarded the scene of these patriotic exploits became exchanged for a more personal feeling of joy as we felt the climate alter, in token that we were advancing nearer and nearer to Italy.

The valley we traversed was met here by another; the scenery was huge, craggy, and picturesque. Through this second valley is carried the road called the pass of the Ampezzo, the shortest road from Inspruck to Venice. We had several times debated whether we should not go by it; but the wish to see the Lago di Garda decided our negative.

We slept at Brixen—Bressanone is its musical Italian name; but we heard no Italian yet, nor saw a trace of Italy. Murray calls Brixen "a dirty, inanimate town, of 3200 inhabitants." We saw nothing of it. The inn—the Elephant, is a pleasant, country-looking hostelry, on the road-side; trees grow in front, and it resembles the best specimen of a rustic inn in England. Everything was clean and

comfortable, and the waiter spoke English. I bought a tiny figure of Hofer, carved in wood, to do honour to the "*Tyrolean Champion*," who, as Wordsworth well expresses it, was

" Murdered, like one ashore by shipwreck cast,
Murdered without relief."

We found here the moderate charge of a good inn among these mountains: including what we gave to servants, it was nine florins.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH.

OUR journey continues through a most beautiful part of the Tyrol. The road first lay through a narrow, gloomy pass, closed in by dark majestic cliffs, till we crossed the Eisach, when the valley of the Adige opened on us, with the town of Bolzano—still lingering in Germany we called it Botzen—surmounted by the Castle of Eppan; again, I repeat, differing as these valleys and mountains do one from another, delightedly as the eye dwells on the unimaginable variety of grouping which this picturesque and majestic region presents, words cannot describe it. Our road was cut in the side of a mountain, and wound beneath lofty crags; a narrow plain, with a dashing torrent, the Eisach in the depth, and lofty mountains closing in the valley on either

side. I have used such words before: mark the difference here. Fair Earth scents the gales of *Italy*, and already begins to assume for herself the loveliness which is the inheritance of that country. The slopes of the lower hills are covered by vines. We stopped to bait the horses at what, in England, would be called an ale-house, a very humble inn, which we did not enter; but there was a sort of rustic summer-house and terracc overlooking the Eisach. The terrace was shaded by what, in Italy, is called a pergola, or trellised walk of vines; the vegetation was luxuriant; the sun shone bright, and dressed the whole scene in gaiety. My companions felt that they were approaching scenes dreamt of—ardently desired, never seen. The days of my youth hovered near. I stole away among the vines by the margin of the river, to think of Italy, and to rejoice that I was about to tread again its beloved soil; to find myself surrounded by my dear, courteous, kind Italians, instead of the Germans, who, honest-hearted as they doubtless are, under the repulsive mask that invests them, have yet no grace of manners, no show of that intuitive desire to please—none of that cordial courtesy, which renders the lowliest-born Italian gentle in his bearing, and eager to render service.

We slept at Neumarkt, called in Italian, Egna.

We had left our beautiful valley here ; and, as is too often the case, in a region of transition from mountain to plain, the soil is marshy and the district unhealthy. There was a large, new-built, clean hotel at Neumarkt ; but though the rooms were good, the living was intolerably bad, so that we went nearly supperless to bed.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH.

STILL we approached Italy ; the hills were covered with vines, the road shut in by the walls of vineyards. Various valleys branch off at intervals, all affording the scenery peculiar to the Tyrol. I own I had no desire to linger longer in this land : we had continued for so many days among ravines, defiles, and narrow valleys, peering up at the sky from the depths between mountains, that the eye grew eager for a view of heaven, and yearned to behold a more extensive horizon. When the bourne of a journey lies beyond, the desire to linger, even in beautiful scenery, is weak. Since I had left Gmunden and Salzburg I had experienced no desire to stop short.

Some names of cities are so familiar, that one forms an idea of them in one's mind as one does of a celebrated, but personally unknown, individual. The Council of Trent is associated with cardinals and bishops—shepherds of the church, legislators of

religion: there was something princely, yet holy, in its idea. What we saw of it looked miserably dirty; grand at a distance and beautifully situated, on entering it, it was common-place; but, after all, nothing can be more deceptive than the impression a way-worn traveller receives, driven, perhaps, through the meanest streets to an hotel where, fatigued, body and mind, he reposes, and then is off again. Mr. P— sought out the cathedral and the organ, but the organist declared that the instrument was out of tune, whether from laziness or not, I cannot say. The hotel was good; we dined at the *table d'hôte*. Again I was restored to the privilege of speech, as Italian here is as common as German.

Our compact with our *lohn kutschers* ceased at Trent. We paid them 140 Bavarian florins, and gave them 30 swanzigers as drink-gelt; a swanziger is the third of an Austrian florin, its worth is eightpence English, and is a very intelligible and convenient coin. The men were satisfied and we had no reason to be otherwise: their conduct had been, on the whole, negative—sullen and silent; and yet with a latent violence and insolence which peeped out as a rank weed on a grassless plain, strangely, unexpectedly, and by no means welcome; I believe they thought of nothing but their drink-gelt the

whole way. I was much more interested in the horses, who had done their duty rather better.

We had now to look out for a conveyance to Riva, the town at the head of the Lago di Garda, where we are to find the steam-boat, which is to convey us to its southern shores. We engaged a *calèche* and a *caratella* for twenty-two Austrian florins, and were soon on our way. We were in high spirits on having parted with our Germans, and on finding ourselves on the very verge of Italy. I do not pretend to say that this is a correct feeling; but it was natural, considering our ignorance of German. The valley of the Adige is very grand; and the stream, broad and swift, was more of a river than we had seen since the Danube. Several valleys branch off here; and there is another route to Venice. We were sorry not to see the famous Slovin di San Marco, or avalanche of stone, near Serravalle, celebrated by Dante, who was for some time a guest at the Castello Lizzana; where, exiled from Florence, he was entertained by the lord of Castelbarco.

At Roveredo we changed horses: our road, always on the descent, now became exceedingly precipitous, and ran on the very edge of the steep bank of the Adige. Our drivers were strange fellows. He who drove the *calèche* in which I sat, was a rough, uncouth animal; but he of the *caratella* was the

most singular—neither Italian nor German in his ways, wild as an untamed animal—coarse and vulgar as a metropolitan vagrant. He was civil enough, indeed; but seemed half-mad with high spirits. You might have thought him half-drunk, but he was not—roaring and singing, and whipping his horses, and turning round to talk to the gentlemen in the *caratella* with a dare-devil air. I saw him whip his horses into a gallop, and heard him laughing and singing as he dashed down a road, which, in truth, required the drag. It was quite dusk—or rather, but for the stars, dark; which added not a little to the apparent danger. Our driver, a little more tame, yet disdained the drag—and we went down at a rattling pace: I was not sorry, for I was eager to assure myself that our friends in advance were not upset and rolled in the Adige, which rushed at the foot of the rock which our road bounded;—not they,—we reached the bottom, and saw the *caratella* dashing madly on in the advance. Before or since I never met such fellows; if my friends thought that Italians resembled them, they were indeed mistaken; they had none of their innate refinement, but they had their good humour: they were more like what one reads of as the wanderers of the far west—except, we are told, the Americans appear always to calculate,

and so perhaps did these fellows ; but they had the outward guise of nearly being insane.

We got to Riva safe. It stands exactly at the head of the Lago di Garda ;

Suso in Italia bella giace un laco,
Appiè dell' alpe, che serra Lamagna,
Sovra Tiralli, ed ha nome Benaco.
Per mille fonti credo, e più si bagna,
Tra Garda, e Val Camonica e Apennino
Dell' acqua, che nel detto lago stagna.

The coast, with the exception of the spot on which the town stands, is iron-bound ; dark precipices rise abruptly from the water ; a bend in the coast limits the view of the lake to a mile or two merely : behind is the chasm of the Adige, beside which Monte Baldo rises, lofty and dark—and mountains somewhat lower—but even they, sublime in altitude, darken the prospect immediately behind Riva. The town is mean and dirty ; the inn—not bad to look at, is dirty and uncomfortable. It is kept by a large family ; but how different are they from our Cadnabbia people ! There are seven sisters—some dress smartly, and sit and receive company, and act the *Padrona* ; others are the Cinderellas of the establishment ; but all are lazy and negligent. The beds were not bad, it is true ; but the fare was uneatable.

We had congratulated ourselves that the steam-

boat, which plies every other day, would leave Riva on the morrow of our arrival; but we found it had not arrived as it ought, and doubts of course hung, as it had not arrived, over the date of its departure.

WEDNESDAY, 14TH.

THE morning has come, but no steam-boat. It is detained, we are told, at the other end of the lake by the wind. This assertion seems fabulous; we have no breeze, the waters are glassy: but thus is it with lake Benacus. The wind, coming down the chasms of the mountains, is not felt in the sheltered nook in which Riva is situated; but drives with violence on the southern portion of this vast inland sea, and lashes it into tempest.

We walked out: there is a path for a short distance on one side under the rock, but the road soon ends; the coast, as I have said, is iron-bound. One of my friends began a sketch of the castle La Rocca, built by the Scaligers, and which forms a picturesque object: then I loitered in the town, delighting my eyes with Italian names and words over the shop-doors. We went out for a short time on the lake, but a shower came on—a drizzle first, which ended in pouring rain. We were truly uncomfortable—forced into the dirty, uncomfortable inn, unprovided with books; and, worst of all, quite uncertain as to the

arrival of the steamer. The house is full of travellers similarly situated, and others continually arriving; this does not comfort us. Our madcap drivers of the night before are still here; we have canvassed with them the expense of going by land to Venice, but their demands are exorbitant. We have talked with the boatman, of making the voyage in a large open boat; but the time that this would occupy is evidently uncertain: besides, a lingering remnant of reason assures us that, if the steamer be detained by adverse winds at the other end of the lake, this wind, however favourable, must have raised a sea to endanger our navigation. Our projects, therefore, have only served to cheat time a little, and are given up. Dinner has proved no occupation or relief; it was so singularly and uncomfortably bad, that it was difficult to eat any portion of it. Now evening has come, and still it rains hard; the many travellers are dispersed about the house in a state of listless anxiety. Another day like this is too fearful a vision: we have ceased even to speak of the chances of release, for we grow hopeless. The people of the inn finding the boat does not arrive, begin to talk of some accident in the machinery; conversation languishes among all the groupes. I sit writing at a window till twilight is thickening into darkness. Hush! a sound—distant—increasing; can it be the

splash of paddles? The bend of the lake prevents the boat being seen till quite close at hand; my soul is in my ears, listening: at length the sound draws the attention of others; one by one they congregate near the windows, but there is silence among all, broken only by hurried interjections swiftly silenced, that each may listen more intently. At last—there can be no doubt—there is a burst of joy as we behold the smoky, but most amiable monster, double the headland and bear down on the town. O, how good-humoured and communicative we are all become; what a clatter of voices, what joyful mutual congratulations! One sight we have just witnessed, is ridiculous to us who have the best of it—very disagreeable to the actors in the scene: on arriving at the quay the travellers poured out from the steamer, the porters shouldered the luggage, and all came in one stream to our hotel. There was no room; the voyagers expectant occupied every apartment. Travellers and porters went their way out again—the world was before them; but their choice was limited to some most wretched holes.

SEPTEMBER 15TH.

WE thought ourselves in all things fortunate, when the morrow dawned bright and sunny. We had a heavenly voyage, which repaid us for yesterday's *ennui*,

and satisfied us that we had done the wisest thing in the world in entering Italy by the Lago di Garda. We left the abrupt, gloomy, sublime north, and gently dropped down to truly Italian scenes. The waters of the lake are celebrated for their azure tint; no waves could be so brightly blue, so clear, so that we saw the bottom of the lake, fathoms below. The mountains sank to hills, with banks cut into terraces, and covered with olives and vines, decorated by orange and lemon-trees; the country-houses sparkled in the sun. One of my friends quoted the lines that celebrate Benacus. Strangely enough, though weather-bound at Riva by one of those storms for which this lake is famous, we saw not a wave upon its surface; not even a curled ripplet, reminded us that it was

teque,
Fluctibus et fremitur assurgens,
Benace marino.

We landed at Lasise, a town distant fifteen miles from Verona, and while I employed myself in engaging a *veturino* for that place, and wandered about the town, my companions went to bathe in the clear waters of the azure lake. The promontory of Sirmio was in sight; an Italian landscape all around, an Italian sky, bright above: it was an hour of delicious joy—set, like a priceless diamond in the lead of common life—never to be forgotten.

O, best of all the scattered spots that lie
 In sea or lake, apple of landscape's eye,—
 How gladly do I drop within thy nest,
 With what a sigh of full, contented rest,
 Scarce able to believe my journey o'er,
 And that these eyes behold thee safe once more !
 Oh, where 's the luxury, like the smile at heart,
 When the mind, breathing, lays its load apart,—
 When we come home again, tired out, and spread
 The loosen'd limbs o'er all the wished-for bed !
 This, this alone, is worth an age of toil.
 Hail, lovely Sirmio ! hail, paternal soil !
 Joy, my bright waters, joy ; your master's come !
 Laugh, every dimple on the cheek of home !*

• AD SIRMIONEM PENINSULAM.

Peninsularum, Sirmio, insularumque
 Ocelle, quascunque in liquentibus stagnis,
 Marique vasto fert uterque Neptunus ;
 Quam te libenter, quamque lætus inviso,
 Vix mi ipse credens Thyniam, atque Bithynos
 Liquisse campos, et videre te in tuto.
 O quid solutis est beatius curis
 Cum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino
 Labore fessi venimus larem ad nostrum,
 Desideratoque acquiescimus lecto ?
 Hoc est quod unum est pro laboribus tantis.
 Salve, O venusta Sirmio, atque hero gaude ;
 Gaudete, vosque Lariæ lacus undæ :
 Ridete quidquid est domi cachinnorum.

The above translation, from the verses of Catullus, is by Mr. Leigh Hunt.

LETTER VI.

Verona.—Journey to Venice.—Leone Bianco.—Hotel d'Italia.

SEPTEMBER 18TH.

I AM again in Italy. The earth is teeming with the wealth of September, the richest month of the year. The harvest of the Indian corn has begun; the grapes are hanging in rich ripening clusters from the vines, festooned from tree to tree: a genial atmosphere mantles the earth, and quickens a sense of delight in our hearts. The road lies through a richly cultivated country: the immense plain around us is bounded to the north by the mountains of the Tyrol, amongst which we seemed to have lost ourselves for an age, so refreshing, so new, so enchanting, is the wide expanse of fertile Lombardy, opening before our eyes.

A sad disaster happened on our arrival at Verona. We had each our passport, and the whole was consigned to the pocket-book of one of the party; and when they were asked for at the gates of Verona, the pocket-book was not to be found. Except our

passports, and Coutts' *lettre d'indication*, it contained no papers of importance; but still, after all the annoyance the Austrians give about passports, it was rather appalling. Nothing could be done. It was remembered that when bathing, the pocket-book was safe; it must have been lost since. We were allowed to go on to the inn, and time would shew the result.

The Gran Parigi is one of the most comfortable hotels I was ever at; it has the air of a palace, as doubtless it once was. The same evening, by the light of the clear full moon, my companions rambled about the town and entered the amphitheatre, which is used as a circus, and horsemanship was going on, and music filled the air. There was something startling in finding the building of ancient days used for its original purpose—the seats occupied by numerous spectators; the partial moonlight veiled with some mystery what the garish sun had disclosed as below Roman dignity in the assemblage.

You know the charm of these Lombard cities. Built by a prosperous people, they have a princely and magnificent appearance: their grandeur is what grandeur ought to be—not gloomy and menacing, but cheerful and inspiring. The cities look built by a happy people in which to be happy—by a noble

and rich people, whose tastes were dignified, and whose habits of life were generous.

We were promised a paper that would give us free course to Venice—for our Consul was at that city—and we were to be transferred to him, and meanwhile, our loss was made known in the country about. But, though the paper was promised, one or another of my friends was employed the whole morning in getting it properly signed. These delays were vexatious, more from the uncertainty that hung about the whole transaction, which kept us in attendance and perplexity. There was no help. We rambled to the garden, or walled *podere*, in which there is an open *fosse*, and an old sort of sarcophagus, which they show as Juliet's tomb. That Juliet lived and died, as Baldelli recounts, there can be little doubt; but it is not likely that this was "the tomb of the Capulets." Still such a scene—a garden, with its high antique walls, its Italian vegetation, and the blue sky, cloudless above—was a scene familiar to Juliet; and her spirit might hover here, even if her fair form was sepulchred elsewhere. It was a long walk thence to the tombs of the Scaligers. The most fairy architecture—not dark and Gothic, nor immured within the walls of a church;—a small open court encloses these elegant sepulchres.

At length we obtained the paper, and set out.

We had engaged a *veturino* for Venice. Some hope had we that the railroad might be open from Padua to Mestri; if not, we were to be taken to Fusina, sleeping at Vicenza in our way. The charm of autumnal vegetation, in a rich vine country, adorned the road, and a distant view of the Alps bounded the scene. We arrived at Vicenza at eleven o'clock, by a bright moonlight. I was sorry to see no more of these Palladian palaces than the glimpses we caught from our carriage-windows. Architecture shows to peculiar advantage by the silver radiance of a full moon: its partial white light throws portions into strong relief, and the polished marble reflects its, so to speak, icy radiance.

SEPTEMBER 19TH.

WE found, on our arrival at Padua, that the railroad was not open; so we proceeded along the banks of the Brenta to Venice. Many a scene, which I have since visited and admired, has faded in my mind, as a painting in the Diorama melts away, and another struggles into the changing canvass; but this road was as distinct in my mind as if traversed yesterday. I will not here dwell on the sad circumstances that clouded my first visit to Venice. Death hovered over the scene. Gathered into myself, with my "mind's eye" I saw those before me long departed;

and I was agitated again by emotions—by passions—and those the deepest a woman's heart can harbour—a dread to see her child even at that instant expire—which then occupied me. It is a strange, but to any person who has suffered, a familiar circumstance, that those who are enduring mental or corporal agony are strangely alive to immediate external objects, and their imagination even exercises its wild power over them. Shakspere knew this, and the passionate grief of Queen Constance thence is endued with fearful reality. Wordsworth, as many years ago I remember hearing Coleridge remark, illustrates the same fact, when he makes an insane and afflicted mother exclaim,—

“The breeze I see is in the tree ;
It comes to cool my babe and me.”

Holcroft, who was a martyr to intense physical suffering, alludes to the notice the soul takes of the objects presented to the eye in its hour of agony, as a relief afforded by nature to permit the nerves to endure pain. In both states I have experienced it ; and the particular shape of a room—the progress of shadows on a wall—the peculiar flickering of trees—the exact succession of objects on a journey—have been indelibly engraved in my memory, as marked in, and associated with, hours and minutes when the nerves were strung to their utmost tension by the

endurance of pain, or the far severer infliction of mental anguish. Thus the banks of the Brenta presented to me a moving scene ; not a palace, not a tree of which I did not recognise, as marked and recorded, at a moment when life and death hung upon our speedy arrival at Venice.

And at Fusina, as then, I now beheld the domes and towers of the queen of Ocean arise from the waves with a majesty unrivalled upon earth. We were hailed by a storm of *gondolieri* ; their vociferations were something indescribable, so loud, so vehement, so reiterated ; till we had chosen our boat, and then all subsided into instant calm.

I confess that on this, my second entrance into Venice, the dilapidated appearance of the palaces, their weather-worn and neglected appearance, struck me forcibly, and diminished the beauty of the city in my eyes. We proceeded at once to the Leone Bianco, on the Canale Grande ; they asked a very high price for their rooms, which rendered us eager, as we intended to remain here a month, to make immediate arrangements for removing elsewhere.

Our first act was to send our letters of introduction ; the second, for two of us to go out to look for lodgings. The account brought back by our second dove from the ark was rather discouraging ; but our first brought better things. Count —— and Signor ——

loved and respected too sincerely the writer of our letters not to hasten on the instant to acknowledge them. Signor —— at once perceived and entered into our difficulty. I never saw such friendly zeal ; nor was Count —— behind in kindness, though, as a younger man, and not so conversant with the perplexities of travellers, he could not be so efficient in his help. The thing was soon settled. Signor —— remarked that if we took lodgings we should want a cook, and that housekeeping in an unknown town, for a short space of time, was fraught with annoyance. There was a new hotel just established, which desired to be made known to the English, and which therefore would be moderate in its charges. We went to see the rooms. The Hotel d'Italia is situated in a canal, three oar-strokes from the Canale Grande ; so far we lost what is most to be coveted at Venice—the view from our window of this ocean stream, with its bordering palaces,—but we were within three minutes' walk of the Place of Saint Mark. Our rooms were on the second floor, a bed-room a-piece, and a *salon*, spacious, turned to the sun, and being but just furnished, clean in the excess of newness. Many a palace had been spoiled of its marble architraves and ornaments to decorate this new hotel. We made our bargain ; we calculated that, everything included, each of our party

would pay nine pounds a month for lodging and board.

This done, we returned with our kind friends to the Leone Bianco, as we are not to remove till tomorrow. Evening has come, and the moon, so often friendly to me, now at its full, rises over the city. Often, when here before, I looked on this scene, at this hour, or later, for often I expected S.'s return from Palazzo Mocenigo, till two or three in the morning; I watched the glancing of the oars of the gondolas, and heard the far song, and saw the palaces sleeping in the light of the moon, which veils by its deep shadows all that grieved the eye and heart in the decaying palaces of Venice. Then I saw, as now I see, the bridge of the Rialto spanning the canal. All, all is the same; but as the Poet says—

“The difference to me!”

LETTER VII.

The Ducal Palace.—The Accademia delle Belle Arti.

VENICE, SEPTEMBER.

I MISS greatly the view of the Canale Grande from my window ; however, the result, probably, of our being in a narrow canal will be, that I shall see much more of Venice : for were we among its most noble palaces, it would suffice and amply fill the hours, merely to loiter away the day gazing on the scene before us. As it is, though singularly Venetian—the wave-paved streets beneath, the bridge close at hand—the peep we get at wider waters at the opening,—it is but a promise of what we may find beyond, and tempts us to wander.

There is something so different in Venice from any other place in the world, that you leave at once all accustomed habits and everyday sights to enter enchanted ground. We live in a palace ; though an inn, such it is : and other palaces have been robbed of delicately-carved mouldings and elegant marbles, to decorate the staircase and doorways. You know

the composition with which they floor the rooms here, resembling marble, and called everywhere in Italy *Terrazi Veneziani*: this polished uniform surface, whose colouring is agreeable to the eye, gives an air of elegance to the rooms; then, when we go out, we descend a marble staircase to a circular hall of splendid dimensions; and at the steps, laved by the sea, the most luxurious carriage—a boat, invented by the goddess of ease and mystery, receives us. Our gondolier, never mind his worn-out jacket and ragged locks, has the gentleness and courtesy of an attendant spirit, and his very dialect is a shred of romance; or, if you like it better, of classic history: bringing home to us the language and accents, they tell us, of old Rome. For Venice

“Has floated down, amid a thousand wrecks
Uninjured, from the Old World to the New.”*

With the world of Venice before us, whither shall we go? I would not make my letter a catalogue of sights; yet I must speak of the objects that occupy and delight me.

First, then, to the Ducal palace. A few strokes of the oar took us to the noble quay, from whose pavement rises the Lion-crowned column, and the tower of St. Mark. The piazzetta is, as it were, the vestibule to the larger piazza.

* Rogers's "Italy."

But I spare description of a spot, of which there are so many thousand—besides numerous pictures by Canaletti and his imitators, which tell all that can be told—show all that can be shown: to know Venice, to feel the influence of its beauty and strangeness, is quite another thing; perhaps the vignettes to Mr. Rogers's Italy, by Turner, better than any other description or representation, can impart this.

From the piazzetta we entered a grass-grown court, once the focus of Venetian magnificence—for, at the top of that majestic flight of steps which rises from it, the Doges were crowned. The *cortile* is surrounded by arcades, decorated by two magnificent bronze reservoirs, and adorned by statues. The effect is light and elegant, even now that neglect has drawn a veil over its splendour. Yet Nature here is not neglectful; her ministrations may be said even to aid the work of the chisel and the brush, so beautiful are they in their effects.

The Scala de' Giganti was before us, guarded by two almost colossal figures of Mars and Neptune, the size of whose statues gives the name to the steps: ascending them, we found ourselves in the open gallery that runs round three sides of the court, supported by the arcades. Yawning before us was the fatal lion's mouth, receiver of those anonymous accusations, the terror of all, and destroyer of

many of the citizens. Ringing a bell, we were admitted into the palace.

We do not visit it once only; day after day we wander about these magnificent, empty halls—sometimes going in by the hall of audience, sometimes ascending the Scala d'Oro, we enter in by the library. Sometimes we give ourselves up to minute view of the many frescoes, which record the history, the glories, and even the legends of Venice. At the dawn of the art, the more than royal government caused the walls to be thus adorned by Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, and subsequently by Titian: a fire unfortunately destroyed their work in 1577; and the present paintings are by Tintoretto, Paul Veronese, and others. On an easel in the library, is a picture in oil by Paul Veronese,—the Queen of Cyprus, Catherine Cornaro, a daughter of Venice, resigning her crown to the Doge—an iniquitous act enough on the part of the republic; as others, heirs of Cyprus, with claims more legitimate than Catherine's, existed. There is the grace and dignity, characteristic of this painter, in the various personages of the group. It is to be raffled for, and the proceeds of the lottery are to be given to the infant schools; but the tickets are sold slowly, and the time when they are to be drawn is yet unfixed. There are marbles also, in this room, that deserve

attention,—some among them are relics of antiquity ; for the Rape of Ganymede is attributed to Phidias, and worthy of him. Sometimes we wander about, content only with the recollections called up by the spot ; and we step out on the balconies which now command a view of the piazzetta, now of the inner courts, with a liberty and leisure quite delightful : and then again we pass on, from the more public rooms to the chambers, sacred to a tyranny the most awful, the most silent of which there is record in the world. The mystery and terror that once reigned, seems still to linger on the walls ; the chamber of the Council of Ten, paved with black and white marble, is peculiarly impressive in its aspect and decorations : near at hand was the chamber of torture, and a door led to a dark staircase and the state dungeons.

The man who showed us the prisons was a character—he wanted at once to prove that they were not so cruel as they were represented, and yet he was proud of the sombre region over whose now stingless horrors he reigned. A narrow corridor, with small double-grated windows that barely admit light, but which the sound of the plashing waters beneath penetrates, encloses a series of dungeons, whose only respiratories come from this corridor, and in which the glimmering dubious day dies away

in "darkness visible." Here the prisoners were confined who had still to be examined by the Council. A door leads to the Ponte de' Sospiri—now walled up—for the prisons on the other side are in full use for criminals: years ago I had traversed the narrow arch, through the open work of whose stone covering the prisoners caught one last hasty glimpse of the wide lagunes, crowded with busy life. Many, however, never passed that bridge—never emerged again to light. One of the doors in the corridor I have mentioned leads to a dark cell, in which is a small door that opens on narrow winding stairs; below is the lagune; here the prisoners were embarked on board the gondola, which took them to the Canal Orfano, the drowning-place, where, summer or winter, it was forbidden to the fishermen, on pain of death, to cast their nets. Our guide, whom one might easily have mistaken for a gaoler, so did he enter into the spirit of the place, and take pleasure in pointing out the various power it once possessed of inspiring despair; this guide insisted that the Pozzi and Piombi were fictions, and that these were the only prisons. Of course, this ignorant assertion has no foundation whatever in truth. From the court, as we left the palace, he pointed to a large window at the top of the building, giving token that the room within was airy and light-

some, and said with an air of triumph, *Ecco la Prig, ne di Silvio Pellico!*—Was he to be pitied when he was promoted to such a very enviable apartment, with such a very fine view? Turn to the pages of Pellico, and you will find that, complaining of the cold of his first dark cell, he was at midsummer transferred to this airy height, where multitudinous gnats and dazzling unmitigated sunshine nearly drove him mad. Truly he might regret even these annoyances when immured in the dungeons of Spielberg, and placed under the immediate and *paternal* care of the Emperor—whose endeavour was to break the spirit of his *rebel children* by destroying the flesh; whose sedulous study how to discover means to torment and attenuate—to blight with disease and subdue to despair—puts to shame the fly-killing pastime of Dioclesian. Thanks to the noble hearts of the men who were his victims, he did not succeed. Silvio Pellico bowed with resignation to the will of God—but he still kept his foot upon the power of the tyrant.

Having visited every corner of the palace, and heard the name given for every apartment, we asked for the private rooms in which the Doge slept and ate, which his family occupied. There were none. A private covered way led from these rooms to an adjoining palace, assigned for the private residence

of the Doge. The council were too jealous to allow him to occupy the palace of the republic, except for the purposes of the state.

At other times, turning to the right, when we leave our canal, we are rowed up the Canale Grande to the Accademia delle Belle Arti, to feast our eyes on the finest works of Titian. The picture usually considered the *chef-d'œuvre* of this artist, the Martyrdom of St. Peter the Hermit, has, for the purpose of being copied, been removed from the dark niche in which it is almost lost in the church of the Saints Giovanni and Paolo, and is here. The subject is painful, but conceived with great power. A deep forest, in which the holy man is overtaken by his pursuers, sheds its gloom over the picture; his attendant flies, the most living horror depicted on his face; the saint has fallen, cut down by the sword of the soldier; an angel is descending from above, and, opening heaven, sheds the only light that irradiates the scene. It is very fine; but in spite of the celestial messenger, there is wanting that connecting link with Heaven,—the rapture of faith in the sufferer's countenance, which alone makes pictures of martyrdom tolerable.

I was struck by the last picture painted by the venerable artist—Mary visiting the Tomb of Jesus. I was told that I ought not to admire it; yet I could

not help doing so : there was something impressive in the mingled awe and terror in Mary's face, when she found the body of Jesus gone.

The Marriage at Cana, by Paul Veronese, adorns these walls, removed from the refectory of the suppressed Convent of San Giorgio Maggiore. It is the finest specimen of the feasts which this artist delighted to paint ; bringing together, on a large scale, groups of high-born personages, accompanied by attendants, and surrounded by a prodigality of objects of architecture, dress, ornaments, and all the apparatus of Patrician luxury. It is filled, Lanzi tells us, with portraits of princes and illustrious men then living.

We turned from the splendour of the feast to the more noble beauty of Titian's Presentation of the Virgin—a picture I look at much oftener, and with far greater pleasure, than at the more celebrated Martyrdom. The Virgin, in her simplicity and youth ; in the mingled dignity and meekness of her mien, as she is about to ascend the steps towards the High Priest, is quite lovely ; the group of women looking at her, are inimitably graceful : there is an old woman sitting at the foot of the steps, marvellous from the vivacity and truth of her look and attitude. In another large apartment is the Assumption of Titian. The upper part is indeed glorious. The Virgin is rapt in a paradisiacal ecstasy as she ascends,

surrounded by a galaxy of radiant beings, whose faces are beaming with love and joy, to live among whom were in itself Elysium. Such a picture, and the "Paradiso" of Dante as a commentary, is the sublimest achievement of Catholicism. Not, indeed, as a commentary did Dante write, but as the originator of much we see. The Italian painters drank deep at the inspiration of his verses when they sought to give a visible image of Heaven and the beatitude of the saints, on their canvass.

There are other and other rooms, all filled with paintings of merit. One hall contains the earlier productions of Gentile and Giovanni Bellini. The genius and the elevated piety of these painters give expression to the countenances; but the dry colouring, the want of fore-shortening, the absence of grace everywhere except in the faces—which are often touchingly beautiful—all exhibit the infancy of the art.

The Academy contains also a hall for statues; in which the glossy marble of Canova's Hebe looks, I am sorry to say, shrunk and artificial, beside the mere plaster casts of the nobler works of the Ancients.

LETTER VIII.

Chiesa de' Frari.—San Giorgio Maggiore.—Santa Maria della Salute.
—Lido.—The Giudecca.—The Fondamenti Nuovi.—The Islands.
—The Armenian Convent.

VENICE, SEPTEMBER.

THERE are three churches here in particular, which we have visited several times, with interest; the most venerable, the Westminster Abbey of Venice, is the church of Santa Maria de' Frari, built in the middle of the thirteenth century. Every portion of this vast and noble edifice is filled with tombs and pictures, exciting respect and admiration. Many a Doge is here buried; and many monuments, some mausoleums in size and magnificence, some equestrian, some mere urns, Gothic or of the middle ages, crowd the walls. With more veneration we looked on the unadorned stone, inscribed with the honoured name of Titian. He died on the 9th September, 1575, at the age of ninety-nine, of the plague, and the visitation of this calamity caused the citizens to consign him hastily to the grave, without thought of marking it by any monument or inscription, so that the spot was almost

forgotten. The mortuary registers of the church of S. Tommaso prove that he then died, and was here buried, and his name with a few words conjoined have been chiselled in the pavement. The republic of Venice projected a monument, which the troubled times and invasion of Napoleon prevented their accomplishing. Canova made a model subsequently; but, dying before he could execute it, the marble was entrusted to various sculptors, and is erected in his own honour in this church on the side opposite to the spot where Titian lies. There is something very impressiye in the idea of this monument—a proccssion of figures entering the half-opened door of a dark tomb.

There are several pleasing pictures in the church, chiefly by Salviati; but its pride in painting is an altar-piece of Giovanni Bellini. He had lived long and painted much in fresco, when, at more than sixty years of age, he was initiated in oil painting by Antonello of Messina, and executed his *chef-d'œuvre*,—a picture in the church of San Pietro, on the island of Murano, and that which we have looked at with interest and delight in the sacristy of this church. “It presents,” says Mr. Rio, “the imposing seriousness of a religious composition, in the figure of the Virgin, and in that of the saints which surround the throne on which she sits; in

the faces of the angels it equals the most charming miniatures for freshness of colour and ingenuousness of expression. A foretaste of beatitude seems to have warmed the old man's soul as he worked—he has removed the cloud of melancholy with which he formerly loved to cover the Virgin's countenance; he no longer paints the Mother of the seven sorrows, but rather the cause of our joy.”*

Exactly opposite our canal, at the entrance from the Quay to the Canale Grande, is the church of San Giorgio Maggiore; it is built chiefly from a model of Palladio, and is the noblest in Venice. Our gondola landed us at the spacious marble platform before the church. Its situation is most happy. Looked at from the Piazzetta, it is the most stately ornament of Venice. Looking from it, a view is commanded of the towers, and domes, and palaces, that illustrate the opposite shore. The church is immense, and adorned by several pictures of Titian. A convent adjoined, now destroyed; but as we rambled about, we found that they had kindly retained, and left open for the visits of strangers, the celebrated cloister, surrounded by an elegant colonnade of Ionic pillars, and the staircase, which is one of the boasts of Venice.

Somewhat above, within the Canale Grande, is the

* De la Poésie Chrétienne.

church of Santa Maria della Salute ; this was built in 1631, a time when architecture had degenerated, and a multiplicity of ornaments was preferred to that simple harmonious style, whose perfection has to my eye the effect of one of Handel's airs on the ear—filling it with a sense of exalted pleasure. Here was beauty, but it existed even in spite of the defects of the building ; it sprang from its situation, its steps laved by the sea, its marble walls reflecting the prismatic colour of the waves, its commanding a view of great architectural beauty ; within also it contains pictures of eminent merit.

The roof of the Sacristy possesses three Titians, which overpaid you for twisting your neck to look at them. Methinks they ought to convert the exclusive admirer of the mystic school, who would confine painting to the expression of one, it is true, of the most exalted among the passions—adoration, love, and contemplation of Divine perfection. These paintings are, what surely pictures ought to be allowed to be, dramatic in the highest sense ; they tell a story ; they represent scenes with unsurpassed truth and vigour. The killing of Goliath by David, is admirable. The countenance of the youthful hero, as he stands unarmed, “with native honour clad,” is instinct with the glow of victory, purified by his artless reliance on the God of his fathers. The Sacrifice of

Isaac, is the only representation of that tremendous act that ever pleased me : generally it inspires pain—often disgust ; a father, unimpassioned and pitiless, about to cut the throat of his innocent and frightened child. But Titian's imagination allowed him to conceive the feelings that must have actuated and supported both father and son—that of unquestioning certainty that what God ordered was to be obeyed, not only without a murmur, but with alacrity and a serene conviction that good alone could be the result. *In particular, the countenance of Isaac is the most touching commentary on this story ; it displays awe of approaching death, without terror ; it is solemn, and yet lit up by that glance into eternity, and unquestioned resignation to a will higher and better than his own, which alone could sanctify the horror of the moment.*

But, perhaps, surpassing these in power, is the Death of Abel. Usually, you see a man striking his brother the death-blow, as it seems, with cold-blooded brutality : here, you behold the wild frenzy that transported the fratricide out of himself. I have seen the passion of violent and terrible anger well expressed in two pictures only—this one, and that at Berlin, where the Duke of Gueldres clenches his fist at his father.

One day, in one of our many rambles, we tried to

get into a church, but it was at the worst hour for such a visit—between one and four—when the churches are closed. We tried to find the sacristan, when a workman came to us—"You cannot get in there," he said; "but I will show you something." He took us to the building at which he was at work—a convent for Dominicans. The French, during their rule, suppressed all the convents; they are being revived, even in Lombardy, where, till lately, there were none. There was nothing attractive in a modern house divided off into narrow cells, two of which were windowless, and pointed out as *luoghi di castigo*, by our guide; but it was curious (whether satisfactory or not, I leave to others to decide,) to see this building, narrow of dimensions, mean in its proportions, altogether insignificant in size and aspect, replace the stately edifices in which monks of olden time passed their lives.

The church of the Jesuits is in the ornate style dear to this order, and is even in worse taste than usual. Before the high altar is spread the imitation of a carpet, formed of party-coloured marbles. Even the pictures—many of which are by Palma—that hang around, are robbed of their beauty by their juxtaposition to heavy, inelegant ornaments.

We were glad to leave it, and to turn our steps to the church of the Saints Giovanni and Paolo,

a very large and majestic edifice ; it is more venerable than any other in Venice, and belongs to the middle ages ; the name of the architect is lost : an inscription under the organ only tells us, that it was begun in 1246, and consecrated in 1430. It is filled with magnificent tombs of the old Doges, and rich in pictures by Bonifazio, Bassano, Bellini—the famous Martyrdom of Titian is taken hence. We often wander about its vast and stately nave, reading, with pleasure, the historical names on the tombs—taking delight in the many remains of the middle ages—and filled more and more with veneration for the energy, magnificence, and taste of the Venetians.

I cannot tell you of all we see, or it would take you as long to read my letter as we shall be at Venice. As we remain a month, we do not crowd our day with sights ; our gondoliers come in the morning, and we pass our time variously. Sometimes, after visiting a single church, we are rowed over to Lido ; and, crossing a narrow strip of sand, scattered with Hebrew tombstones, find ourselves on the borders of the ocean ; we look out over the sea on vessels bound to the East, or watch the fishing-boats return with a favourable wind, and glide, one after the other, into port, their graceful lateen sails filled by the breeze. We thus loiter hours away,

especially on cold days, when we have been chilled at home ; but Lido has a heat of its own—its sands receiving and retaining the sun's rays—which we do not enjoy among the marbles and pavements of Venice.

As the sun sinks behind the Euganean hills, we recross the lagune. Every Monday of this month is a holiday for the Venetian shopkeepers and common people ; they repair in a multitude of gondolas to Lido, to refresh themselves at the little inn—to meet in holiday trim, and make merry on the sea-sands. We pass them in crowds as we return on that day. Our way is, sometimes (according as the tide serves,) under the walls of the madhouse, celebrated in Shelley's poem of Julian and Maddalo—

“ A windowless, deformed, and dreary pile.”

Yet not quite windowless ; for there are grated, unglazed apertures—against which the madmen cling—and gaze sullenly, or shout, or laugh, or sing, as their wild mood dictates.

We often allow our gondolier to take us where he will ; and we see a church, and we say, what is that ? and make him seek the sacristan, and get out to look at something strange and unexpected. Thus we viewed the church of St. Sebastian, which contains the *chef-d'œuvre* of Paul Veronese, the Martyrdom of

St. Mark. There is something in the works of this artist, which, without being ideal or sublime, is graceful and dignified—according to the dignity of this world;—his groups are formed of the high-born and high-bred, and all the concomitants of his pictures are conceived in the same style of mundane but elegant magnificence. Sometimes we walk: passing through the busy Merceria, we get entangled, and lose ourselves in the *calle* of Venice;—we see an open door and peep in, and ask where we are from a passer by; and hear a name of historic renown, and find ourselves viewing, by chance, one of the wonders of the place. A favourite walk is straight across towards the north, till we reach the Fondamenti Nuovi, a handsome quay, from which we command a view of many of the smaller islands; and far distant, the Julian Alps and the mountains of Friuli. It is to me a most exalted pleasure to look on these heaven-climbing shapes.

Sometimes, if the morning be “kerchiefed in a comely cloud,” and it feels chilly, we cross merely to the Canale della Giudecca, which is almost a lagoon, and being very much wider than the Canal Grande, is not so convenient for common traffic; a handsome street or quay, turned to the south, borders the water—which, receiving the noonday sun, forms a pleasant and warm promenade.

Madame de Genlis exclaims, “ *Quelle triste ville que Venise!*” For those who love the confusion and clatter of carriages, the garish look of smart shops, and a constant flux and reflux of passers-by, it is indeed *dull*. There is no noise (except the church bells, of which there is too much)—no dust; the waters sparkle silently at your feet; the marble palaces catch their radiance and are dressed in prismatic colours, reflected from the waves. It is a place where you may dream away your life, quite forgetful of the rubs, thorns, and hard knocks of more bustling cities.

But if Venice be tranquil, come with me beyond Venice, and tell me what name to give to the superlative stillness that reigns when we cross the lagunes to the islands—Murano, Mazzorbo, Burano Torcello. Little remains on them, except the churches, built in the younger days of Venice; several of these are magnificent in marbles, and interesting from their pictures, painted in the infancy of the art. We rambled about, and our very footsteps seemed unnaturally to invade the stillness that dwells on these desert shores, beside the waveless lagune. For a time we might fancy ourselves—

“ The first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.”

We were pleased; but quiet became lethargy; and the dank grass and marshy ground looked unhealthy. We were glad to be rowed back to Venice.

It was much pleasanter to visit the Armenian convent. This is the *beau idéal* of gentlemanly and clerical seclusion. Its peaceful library; its cultivated and shady garden; the travelled tastes of its inmates, who all come from the East, and are not imprisoned by their vows, but travel on various missions, even as far as that *Ultima Thule* which we consider the centre of all busy life—the view of the domes and towers of Venice; and further still, of the Euganean hills to the west, and of the Alps to the north; the sight you caught of some white sails on the far ocean;—all this gave promise of peace without ennui—a retreat—but not a tomb.

Thus I dwell on the beauty, the majesty, the dreamy enjoyments of Venice. I will now endeavour, though the time I stay is too short to enable me to observe much, to tell you something of the Venetians.

LETTER IX.

Free Port.—Venetian Society.—Titles of the Nobility.—The Dott.
—Infant School.

OCTOBER.

WHEN I was here last, the duties on all imports to Venice were high, living became expensive, and the city languished ;—it is now a free port ; everything enters without paying the slightest toll, with the exception of tobacco. The Emperor of Austria grows a wretched plant, to which he gives this name, on his paternal acres, and will not allow his subjects to smoke anything else. If that were the only misdeed of his government, I should not quarrel with him, but only with the people, who do not thereon forego the idle habit of cigars altogether.

The free port gives a far greater appearance of life and activity to the city than it formerly had ; and some luxuries—such as Turkish coffee, and, indeed, all things from the East, are much better and cheaper than with us. To the Venetians, coffee stands in lieu of wine, beer, spirits, every

exciting drink, and they obtain it in perfection at a very low price. The Austrian is doing what he can to revive trade, so to increase his store; for two thirds of the taxes of the Regno Lombardo-Veneto go to Vienna. He desires that railroads should be made, and one is being constructed from Milan to Venice. Nay, they are in the act of building a bridge for the railroad carriages from Mestre to the centre of the city; however convenient, it is impossible not to repine at this innovation; the power, the commerce, the arts of Venice are gone, the bridge will rob it of its romance.

With scarcely any exception, all the Venetians of the higher ranks are at Villeggiatura at this season, so we have seen but very few of them. The manner in which the upper class live is, I fancy, monotonous enough. In the winter, the Viceroy comes from Milan to inhabit his palace, and gives a few balls. Some ladies open their houses for *conversazioni* in the evening; but the usual style is for each lady to have her circle, and the general drawing-room is the Opera-house; or they assemble in the Piazza of San Marco. There is a plentiful supply of chairs before the doors of the principal *caffès*, and they sit and converse. It is not etiquette for a lady to enter a *caffè*, and they are shocked at the English women, who do not perceive the difference

between eating their ice, or sipping their coffee, in the open Piazza, and entering the shop itself. To sit or to walk, listening to the band, and exchanging visits in this glorious drawing-room, lighted up by the mighty lamps of heaven, is, especially to an unhacknied stranger, a very pleasant way of passing a summer evening. The *caffè* to which the noble Venetians resort, is that of Sutil. Foreigners go next door to Florian, where Galiguani is taken in, which is an attraction to the English.

That reading does not flourish here, may be gathered from the fact that there is no circulating library, nor any literary society, such as are frequent in country towns in France and England, where people subscribe among one another for the supply of books. The French Consul tried to establish one, but did not succeed. I think it is Doctor Gregory who says, reading novels is better than a total incapacity to take an interest in books, since it enlarges the mind more than no reading at all. It is sometimes alleged, that in a state of society where there is no thought nor desire for the acquisition of knowledge, it is better not to read, than to imbibe the opium or exciting cordials of the usual run of novels. The question is, whether these works are not a step towards awakening a desire for nobler and more

useful mental culture. Meanwhile, to live among a people who do not read—do not desire to learn—presents to us a singular phasis of society. What can they do? Many things, it may be said, remain for women in the discharge of their duties, without becoming *•blue*; but the fact is, that a desire for improvement is the salt of the human intellect; that a wish to acquire knowledge is natural to a well-conditioned mind, and ought especially to exist among individuals of that class of society which enjoys uninterrupted leisure. The Italians are delicately organised, and have intuitive taste in music and most of the fine arts; but accomplishments, as they are called, cannot be cultivated to any extent, nor can even a love of duty subsist among the idle, which the Italians proverbially are.

Still, among the Venetians, as all over Italy, you must not suppose because they are ignorant—because they live in a confined routine—because to make love in their youth, and take care of their money in later years, be the occupation of the greater number, that you find the provincial tone of a French or English country town. Graceful manners—accents modulated by the kindest courtesy—suavity that is all gentleness, and a desire to do more than please, to be useful, is innate among them—it reigns in every class of society, and wins irresistibly:

When I was last at Venice, many many years ago, I knew no Venetians, and it so happened that the English whom I saw chose to erect themselves into censors of this people, and to speak of them in unmeasured terms of censure. New to Italy, we believed those who had lived there long. Shelley, in his letters and poems, echoes these impressions. I cannot pretend to say with what justice such opinions were formed: I do not know whether the Venetians are improved. If a foreigner came to England, and chose to associate with the most vicious of our country people, both nobles and that worst race who live by the vices of the rich, he might find as much to abhor as Lord B— represented as detestable at Venice. But then there is another class among us,—and he declared there was no other here. We know, indeed, generally speaking, that Italian morality is not ours; but if it falls short in some things, perhaps in others, if we knew them well, we should be obliged to confess its superiority.

The duties of husband and wife are in England observed with even more sanctity than they obtain credit for. But in how many instances do our affections and duties begin and end there—with the exception of those exercised by the parents towards their *very young* children. We all know

that when a son or daughter marries, they literally fulfil the dictum of Adam, "therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife." Our family affections centre in the small focus of the married pair, and few and ineffectual are the radii that escape and go beyond.

Now, it must be acknowledged that, however endearing at the outset, however necessary and proper, to a certain extent, such a state of things may be, it often degenerates after a little time into the most sordid selfishness. The Italians are deficient in this self-dedication to one, but they have wider extended family attachments, of a very warm and faithful description. We who consider it a necessity of life to have a *menage* to ourselves—each couple in its nest—cannot understand the harmony and affection nourished in a little republic, often consisting of grandfather and grandmother, who may be said to have abdicated power, and live in revered retirement—their days not counted and grudged, as with us is too frequently the case: then comes father and mother, respected and loved—and then brothers and sisters. If a sister marries, she becomes a part of another family, and goes away. The son brings his wife under his father's roof; but the size of their houses renders them independent in their daily life. The younger sons are not apt to

marry, because, in addition to their want of fortune, too many women, essentially strangers, would thus be brought under one roof, and would be the occasion of discord. We know how readily the human heart yields to a law which it looks on as irrefragable; submitting to single life, uncles learn to love their nephews and nieces as if they were their own offspring, and a strong family chain is thus formed. A question may arise as to how much of family tyranny turns these links into heavy fetters. In the first place, their families are seldom as numerous as with us. The necessities of their position fall lightly on the males. All over the world younger sons seldom marry; or only do so to exchange luxury for straitened circumstances; and younger sons who continue to grow old under the paternal roof, sharing *by right* the luxuries to which they were born, and in which they were educated, are better off than our younger sons, who are often thrust forth from the luxurious home of their youth, to live on a bare pittance in a wretched lodging.

Unmarried women all over the Continent have so much the worst of it, that few remain single. How they contrive to dispose of their girls, now convents are in disuse, I cannot tell; but, as I have said, there are not so many as with us, and they usually contrive to marry. At times you may find a maiden aunt,

given up to devotion, who sheds a gentle and kindly influence over the house. It does not strike me that, as regards daughters who survive their parents, things are much better managed with us.

This family affection nurtures many virtues, and renders the manners more malleable, more courteous, and deferential. For the rest, though I cannot pretend to be behind the scenes—and though, as I have said, their morality is confessedly not ours—I am sure there is much both to respect as well as love among the Italians.

The great misfortune which the nobles labour under is, in the first place, a bad education, and afterwards the want of a career. The schools for children are as bad as they can be;—at their universities there is a perpetual check at work, to prevent the students imbibing liberal opinions; for as the governments of Italy consider that those who dedicate themselves to study and reflection are sure to be inimical to them, so do they look on such with jealousy and distrust, while sharp watch is kept on the professors, to prevent their ranging beyond the bounds of science, into the demesnes of philosophy.* Young

* I remember an instance of the sort of interference which occurred in Tuscany, at the University of Pisa, during the mild and comparatively liberal reign of Ferdinand. It is well known that during the Carnival the people promenade in particular streets (in Pisa on the Lungo l'Arno), the gentry in their carriages, and often

men at college, however, are all liberal, all ardent for the freedom of their country, all full of the noblest, though too often the most impracticable views for her regeneration. They leave college,—and what is to become of them? If they have already distinguished themselves for boldness of opinions, or even for great capacity and love of knowledge, they are marked men; they are not permitted to travel;—in any case they have no career, unless they give in at once their adherence to Austria; and, certainly, however hopelessness or misfortune may tame and induce them to do this in after times, at their first outset in life, an Italian would feel as if, in so doing, he were a traitor to his country. Some few there are—as many perhaps as with us—chosen spirits, who can pursue their course, devoted to study, or the service of their fellow creatures—abstracted from the frivolity or vices of society. But the majority have either never felt the true touch of patriotism and a desire for improvement, or find such incompatible with worldly pleasure. There is little or no public employment;

masked. The students at Pisa got up a masque of an elaborate kind, I think of heathen gods and goddesses, or some such thing. The following Carnival, the professors, wishing to turn this play to nobler uses, combined with the students to get up a procession of masks personating all the illustrious men of Italian history. Government considered this a dangerous reminiscence of past glory, and forbade it.

the marine is but a name ; the army, no true Italian would enter ; if they did, they would be quartered far away from their native country, in Hungary or Bohemia ; they have nothing to occupy their minds, and of course plunge into dissipation. *Play* is the whirlpool that engulphs most of them. As with us during the middle of the last century—as among a certain set of our present aristocracy—play is their amusement, their occupation, their ruin ;—many of the noblest Italian families are passing away, never more to be heard of, the heirs of their wealth having lost all in play.—New men, mostly of Jewish extraction, who have gained by banking, stock jobbing, and money lending, what the others have lost by their extravagance, are rising on their downfall.

A curious anomaly exists among the nobility of the north of Italy. It is well known that titles in England are on a different footing from those on the Continent, and hence are far more respected. In England, a peer is an hereditary legislator, he is certain to possess a comparatively large fortune ; so that, to be a noble with us, is to be in the possession of power and influence. His sons, except the eldest, enjoy little of all this, and in the next generation they sink into untitled gentry. In Italy, indeed every where abroad, the descendants of a noble are also noble to the end of time. The individuals of

this order, in consequence, intermarry only among one another, and flourish as a numerous class, wholly apart; but of course the respect in which titles are held is greatly diminished, as power and fortune by no means constantly attend them.

At present many of the most illustrious families of Venice and Lombardy have lost their titles. Thus it happened. On Napoleon's downfall, when Venice and her territories and other parts of Northern Italy were ceded to Austria, the kingdom Lombardo-Veneto was formed, and all those persons who wished to become nobles of the new state, were ordered to prove their titles by producing the diplomas and documents establishing the same. The Venetians could easily have complied, since the names of the nobility were, under the republic, inscribed in the *libro d'oro*; for, although the original of this book was burnt by the republicans in 1797, several copies existed; and the Venetian nobles were informed, that on presenting a petition to request leave, and paying the tax or fees, they might retain the titles of their forefathers. Many who were descended from families which had given doges to the state, refused to petition.—“What is the house of Hapsberg,” they said, “that it should pretend to ennoble the offspring of old Rome?” Nor would they deign to request honours

from the invaders of their country, who carried their insolence so far as to demand proof of noble origin from those who, for centuries, had illustrated the pages of history with their names.*

The nobility of Lombardy were also called upon to ask for the confirmation of the titles which they already possessed, by producing the documents that proved them. Very few were able to comply, as the Jacobins had destroyed their papers when they seized on all public and private archives, and burned them. Thus many of the most ancient and illustrious families are deprived of the titles which, for centuries, they enjoyed. These regulations concern that portion of Lombardy lately incorporated

* All the aristocracy—or as they call it, the *famiglie tribunizie* of Venice, consider themselves descended from old Roman families of the Equestrian order, and the names of several seem to attest the validity of this pretension. Padua sent a colony to the island of Rivo Alto, or Rialto, in 421; and the command for the building of the new city was entrusted to Alberto Faliero, Tommaso Candiano, and Cenone Daulo, or Dandolo. Hence it appears probable that the families of Faliero, Candiano, and Dandolo are descended from the Roman patricians who were present at the first building of the city of Rialto. In the ninth century the seat of Venetian government was transferred from the island of Rialto to Eraclea, and the independence of Venice was established. Now, before and after that epoch it may be said Venice was the only city in Europe, which from its foundation for fourteen centuries never submitted to a foreign yoke: and it is said that the old Venetian families have preserved in their lineaments the primitive character of the race whence they sprung. Dr. Edwards having examined carefully the portraits of the series of doges, and compared them with the countenances of their actual descendants, comes to this conclusion.

in the Austrian kingdom. With regard to the Milanese nobility, and that belonging to the states which Austria possessed before the French Revolution, the edicts touched only the new nobility, for which the Austrian government entertained an antipathy, and was desirous of finding a pretence for depriving of rank ; it was often enabled to succeed by taking advantage of some flaw in their diplomas, or in the manner in which they had fulfilled the conditions contained in the article of the constitution which treats of feudal tenures. It also forced the nobles of Lombardy, who had received additional rank, to choose whether they would belong to the ancient nobility by their old titles, or to the modern by their new. Litta and Visconti, who had been made dukes, as well as others who had been advanced in rank, chose the former, and thus, though of ancient race, belong to the new nobility.

But to return to the more important topic of the state of knowledge in Italy—for this matter of titles is held by themselves in great contempt, and only thought of as marking the desire of Austria to arrogate power and to annoy. The Italians care very little for titles ; and I have often heard them say, that until they visited France or England, they scarcely knew, or cared whether they possessed any.

You must not suppose, from what I say, that Italy

in no way shares in the enlightenment of the present times. Moreover, the Emperor of Austria admits the diffusion of *science* in his dominions. Happy Italians, to whom is conceded one path, on which their minds may proceed in the journey *onwards* for which God created man. The Austrian government is aware that their own native subjects can go pottering on with theories and science, without one aspiration to become men, in the free and noble sense of self-government, stirring in their hearts: it supposes that it will be the same in Italy; but the people of this country are made of different clay; and it seems to me, that as Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh for his own destruction, so does he soften the heart of Prince Metternich, thus to admit a system of improvement into Lombardy, which will hereafter prove the instrument of the overthrow of his power. Science is generally pursued by clever Italians as a mode of employing their understandings, which does not excite the suspicion of government; and scientific meetings, such as assemble with us at stated times in the great provincial towns, take place yearly in Italy. This season the learned met in Padua; and at the inn where we refreshed ourselves in that city, we found tables spread for three hundred *Dotti*, as they are called. A ridiculous story came to us the other day from across the

lagune. A student of the university looking over the bridge, and seeing come up the river a barge full of pumpkins, cried out, “Vengono i dotti—see, they have sent their heads before them!” *Testa di zucca*, or pumpkin-head, answers to our phrase of blockhead. This, however, was regarded as a serious insult, and the offender has been put under arrest, and is to be imprisoned till the great men leave Padua.

There is another point for which the government shews toleration, on condition that its own political catechism is taught—infant schools. I visited one, and was much interested. It belongs to our district of Venice, and is one among many. It was for both boys and girls under the age of nine. I saw the girls’ room first. They learn according to the system now prevalent everywhere for teaching the poor—Bell’s and Lancaster’s, as it used to be called. There were some thirty or forty girls; and I am sorry to say they did not shew so well as the boys; the cause, *I trust*, being that the head-teacher, a priest, attended only to the latter. I do not mean to detract from the governesses who presided over both schools: they seemed sensible and zealous, and in every way the whole thing was respectable. But the priest, a young man, has a passion for arithmetic; he teaches it with ardour to his pupils, who have a

happy knack for the same; and the sums we witnessed brought to a happy conclusion by these little fellows, all under nine years of age, and one between seven and eight being the cleverest, were to me quite prodigious. Once the master disputed a point; the boys insisted they were right, and so it proved. We gave the sums. As to the correctness of the computation, we trusted a good deal to the honour of the governesses and master; but in truth, to see the eager and intelligent way in which the boys answered, was quite sufficient, for no one could be so ready and glad unless he felt himself in the right. These children were not pretty. I have often remarked, that handsome as the Italian common people are, their children (probably from bad food) are seldom good-looking.

Unfortunately, when the children leave the infant schools, their education ends; they fall back on the habits of indolence and ignorance indigenous here. How far their arithmetical studies may conduce to their honesty, I cannot guess. I am not one of those who say,

“Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.”

A little light is better than total darkness; especially in Italy, where the cleverness of the people prevents their ever becoming stupid. They must learn something; and a little good is better than all bad.

LETTER X.

Venetian Palaces.—Gondolieri.—Basilica of St. Mark.—Opera.—
Illumination of the Fenice.

VENICE, OCTOBER.

MANY of the palaces of Venice still preserve their pictures, and shew, in their numbers and beauty, the wealth and taste of the families in old time. The Palazzo Manfrin contains, I think, the largest and most choice collection. It has some incomparable pictures by Giorgione, the contemporary, and rival, of Titian. He also was a pupil of Gian Bellini, but invented a style of his own, and first painted with that richness and grandeur of colouring which is the pride of the Venetian school. His pictures in the Palazzo Manfrin are wonderfully beautiful. The Deposition from the Cross, by Titian, is here: indeed, the collection is in every respect magnificent, and deserves many visits. In the Palazzo Mocenigo (which Lord Byron inhabited—there are two palaces Mocenigo: it is one of the most illustrious families of Venice), there is the design for the Paradiso of Tintoretto. In the Palazzo Pisani

is an admirable picture by Paul Veronese—the Family of Darius at the feet of Alexander. It rises above his usual style of mere portraiture into the ideal. There is the true chivalrous expression in the mien and countenance of the youthful victor—the grandeur of habitual command, the dignity resulting from noble ambition ; at the same time, you see that his very soul is touched by compassion for the fallen princesses, and the ingenuous shame which a generous mind feels on beholding those lately placed so high humiliate themselves before him, mantles in his face.

In the Barberigo Palace is the Maddalena Scapigliata of Titian. Her eyes, swollen and red, are raised to heaven, and her face is disfigured by much weeping. Her remorse, her vehemence of grief, differs wholly from the tender sorrow, chastened and supported by faith, of Correggio's Magdalen. At first sight, the deformity of her features produced by violent weeping, is almost repulsive ; but the picture gains on you ; the real beauty of the countenance—a something of noble and soft, in spite of passionate sorrow and self-abasement—is perceptible through her tears.

We were taken to-day to see a modern picture painting for the Emperor. It is on a large scale—Foscari taking leave of his Father ; his mother is fainting ; the Doge, struggling with contending

emotions, turns half away. The best figure is that of the son: the feebleness arising from physical suffering—veneration for his seemingly severe parent—grief, tenderness, and resignation—are well expressed in his kneeling figure and downcast face.

The Venetians are much interested at this moment by the restoration of the Pala of the high altar of St. Mark's. It required an order to view it and the other precious objects preserved in the Treasury.

The Basilica of San Marco is the most singular among the edifices of Venice. Its strange Arab architecture denotes its great antiquity. The ancient chapel of St. Theodore (who, before the transfer of the body of St. Mark, was the patron saint of the city), built in 552, was incorporated in 828 in the ancient church of St. Mark, at the time when the bones of the Saint arrived. These edifices being consumed by fire, the foundations of the present were laid in 976, and completed in 1071; but even until the middle of the last century its internal decorations were not completed.

Every portion glistens with precious stones. Its walls are covered with pictures in Mosaic: its pavement, and the five hundred columns that adorn it, are composed of verde antique, jasper, porphyry, agate, and the most precious marbles. Usually, one cares little for such things; but here the barbaric

magnificence—the Eastern aspect—the tombs of heroes it contains, and its association with the glories of the republic—combine to render the tribute of Mammon to Heaven interesting.

The high altar has two Pale: one covers the other. The internal one, a curiosity from its richness, has been taken down to be repaired. It is called the Pala d'oro, and is formed of enamel paintings on silver and gold, encrusted with a profusion of gems; it was executed at Constantinople by order of the Doge Picro Orscolo, under whose reign the Basilica was finished. It now forms the delight of Venice, and many noble ladies have contributed a quantity of gems, to replace those that have been lost. It is a curious specimen of the state of the arts in the middle ages, before it revived and received a soul from the great painters of Tuscany and Umbria. It is all glitter and richness, and a sort of barbaric elegance, without real taste.

The treasure of St. Mark once overflowed with wealth, in gems, pearls, and worked gold, chiefly transferred from Constantinople; these have all disappeared; the only objects that attract attention are an antique porphyry vase, with letters carved on it, such as are found in Persepolis—and a golden rose, one of those which it was the practice of the popes to present on certain occasions to catholic sovereigns.

This had been presented to a doge of Venice ; it was no meagre gift, being a very large bough, bearing many roses, all formed of the precious metal.

Each day we grow more familiar with this delightful city—favourite of Amphitrite and the Nereids ; the little roots, generated by sympathy and enjoyment, begin to strike out, and I shall feel the violence of transplanting when forced to go. I look wistfully on some of the palaces, thinking that here I might find a pleasant, peaceful home ; nor is the idea, though impracticable for me, wholly visionary. Several of the palaces, bereft of their old possessors, are used for public offices, or are let at a low rent. It is easy to obtain a house, whose marble staircase, lofty halls, and elegant architecture, surpass anything to be found in France or England. Several English gentlemen have taken apartments, and fitted them up with old furniture, and find themselves, at slight cost, surrounded by Venetian grandeur. No one can spend much money in Venice :—a gondola is a very inexpensive carriage ; hiring one, as we do, costs four swanzikers a day—about four pounds a month, with a *buona mano* of half a swanziker a day to the gondolier, on going away.

Of course, if settled, you must build your own gondola ; and to be *respectable* you must have two *gondolieri* in livery. The appearance of the boat-

men dressed like footmen is, to my eye, the only inharmonious sight in Venice. These men used to be reserved only for the use of the gondola and carrying messages ; but in these poorer days, they serve as domestics in the house ; they are still, however, a race apart, thoroughly acquainted with every nook and corner of the city ; intelligent, alert, zealous ; ready (as we were told of old) to do any bad errand ; but with such having nothing to do, we know nothing. We have two gondolas in our pay. One of the *gondolieri* is a favourite, Beppo, No. 303 ; the other, Marco, 307. We have no fault to find with either ; and they join intelligence to exactness. At first, we would not engage Marco, because, accustomed to foreigners, he was proud of his scraps of bad French. We made a bargain with him that he should always speak Italian—Venetian we would not insist upon, for we should not understand him. I am almost sorry to know nothing of Venetian ; it was the first dialect formed from Latin that was written. At the time when, in the other cities of Italy, the annals were drawn up in barbarous Latin, the Venetians made their records in their vernacular tongue, which remain to this day in multitudinous volumes in the Library of St. Mark. It has been averred that the first colonists from Padua brought this dialect of the

Latin with them, and that it is a remnant of the vernacular of Roman Italy. Nine centuries later, the *lingua Toscana* could scarcely be said to exist; the language of Brunetto Latini, Dante's master, being very scant and inefficient. I am told that Dante himself hesitated whether to write his "Divina Comedia" in Latin or Venetian, till fortunately he became aware that the talk of the common people of Tuscany possessed all the elements of expression; and he, collecting them with that life-giving power proper to genius, "created a language, in itself heroic and persuasive, out of a chaos of inharmonious barbarisms."* There is, I believe, even at this day, greater scope for wit and airy grace in Venetian than in Tuscan.

The *gondolieri* often sing at their oars; nor are the verses of Tasso quite forgotten. One delicious calm moonlight evening, as we were walking on the Piazzetta, an old *gondoliere* challenged a younger one to alternate with him the stanzas of the "Gerusalemme." I have often wished to hear them. It was a double pleasure that I did not do so by command, but in the true old Venetian way, two challenging each other voluntarily, and taking up alternate stanzas, till one can remember no more, and the other comes off conqueror. We are told

* Shelley's "Defence of Poetry."

that the air to which they sing is monotonous : so it is ; yet well adapted to recitation. The antagonists stood on the Piazzetta, at the verge of the laguna, surrounded by other *gondolieri*—the whole scene lighted up by the moon. They chanted the favourite passage, the death of Clorinda. I could only follow the general sense, as they recite in Venetian ; but the subject of the verse, high and heroic, the associations called up—the beauty of the spot—a sort of dignity in the gestures of the elder boatman, and nothing harsh, though it might be monotonous, in their chaunt—the whole thing gave me inexpressible pleasure—it was a Venetian scene, dressed in its best ; and the imagination was wrapped in perfect enjoyment.

The weeks pass away, and we are soon, I am sorry to say, about to leave Venice. We have taken our sight-seeing quietly, and each day has had a novel pleasure. It is one of our amusements to visit the piazza of San Marco at two in the afternoon, when, on the striking of the hour on the great clock, the pigeons come down to be fed. These birds are sacred to Saint Mark, and it is penal to kill any. They lead a happy life, petted by all the citizens. Now and then they may be served up at the dinner of a poor man ; but they are too many not to spare,

without grudging, an individual or two for the good of their maintainers.

We have visited the arsenal, a monument of the glory and commerce of Venice; silent, empty, useless. One poor brig lies in the harbour; it served during the late war in the East; and the young officer, who kindly acted as cicerone, had captured a Turkish flag, which showed fresh among ancient Venetian trophies. It seemed only a pretty compliment when I told him, that it gave me more pleasure than all the curiosities he was showing us; but I spoke the simple truth. Anything that demonstrates the valour and spirit of the present race of Italians, is more satisfactory to behold, than all the cobwebbed glories of old times.

No good opera is going on here. The Fenice, the large theatre, is only open during carnival. The most popular amusement is the *famiglia Vianesi*, about half a dozen children, who sing the *Barbiere di Seviglia* and the *Elisir d'Amore*. It was very wonderful, but not pleasing. There is a young and pretty prima donna—a mezzo soprano—Gazzaniga, who takes the part of Romeo in the *Montecchi e Capuletti*, and sings it very nicely; and there is an amusing buffo.

A grand opera was got up at Padua during the visit of the *Dotti*, and even Taglioni was engaged.

There was a talk of her coming to Venice, but it fell to the ground. However, after the learned had dispersed, the operatic company crossed the lagoon, bringing the decorations of *Robert le Diable*. The Italians do not understand German music. They bring it out because it has been praised; but they do not like it; and alter it, and try to make it coincide with their taste, and spoil it completely.

The Emperor Ferdinand's uncle, and the heir presumptive of the imperial crown, is come to spend a day here, and it is thought proper to mark his visit by a festival. The Piazza di San Marco has been illuminated—only with a *mezza illuminazione*, but still it was very beautiful; nor can anything be otherwise in the magnificent theatre of this stately square.

In addition they opened the opera-house of the Fenice, and lighted it up. An *illuminara* in one of the great opera-houses is almost a national event in an Italian town: I never witnessed one before, and now could understand the excitement that it occasions. The price of boxes was very high, some sixty swanzikers and more. Signor — kindly brought me the keys of a very good box, opposite that occupied by the royal party. We went early; the whole house was full; the passages and corridors, all brilliantly lighted, were filled with the common people—admitted without paying. Nothing could be more

animated, more gay. Our gondolier, one of whose offices this is, paid for us, and showed us the way to our box. When the door opened we were dazzled : it was like a scene in fairy land. Accustomed to our few wax candles, and the deforming, sombre light of gas, the innumerable lights that shed more than day over the whole house, produced an effect of brilliancy and elegance quite indescribable.

There had been much debating as to the opera, Gazzaniga wished to have the *Montecchi e Capuletti*, as she shone in the part of Romeo ; but the primo buffo did not like to be excluded from singing before H. R. I. H. Accordingly, the opera of *Chi dura Vince* was fixed on, in which Gazzaniga had a prominent serio-comic part. The story of the play is similar to that of our *Honeymoon* : and the way in which she acted the angry, deluded bride was very amusing. This opera is by Ricci, and has a few agreeable airs in it—though nothing rising above mediocrity. The Archduke went away before the opera was over. Royal personages labour so very hard ; and the Archduke was to leave Venice at four the following morning. He went in a steamer to view the sea-wall building at Malamocco, and thence is to proceed by steam to Trieste. Another steamer accompanied him ; and the first people of Venice, and all strangers, were invited, as for a party of

pleasure. I had a sort of fore-feeling I should not like it ; for though I was assured the steamer would make the voyage in the lagune on this side Lido, I did not quite believe that to be possible. So it proved—the steamers took to the open sea, which was rather rough ; and though plenty was provided to refresh and entertain the guests, very little was eaten.

LETTER XI.

Journey to Florence.—Cold and rainy Season.—Excursion to Val-lombrosa.

OCTOBER 30TH.

WE have taken flight, over plain, river, and mountain, and are arrived in the beautiful city of Italy—Firenze la Bella. We parted excellent friends with the host of l'Hôtel d'Italie, who had shown himself anxious to please, and fair in his dealings. A *vetturino* journey is always somewhat tedious, and the deep roads neighbouring the Po, having been damaged by rain and flood, our progress was more than usually slow. We were drawn by two admirable little horses, and their avaricious master taxed their strength to the utmost. He had demanded more from us, alleging the necessity of extra horses, but grudged the price asked, and went on merely with his own. The stinginess of this fellow had its reward in riches, for he told us he was called Il Miliorino. This it is that makes avarice an incurable vice. It can never be satiated, for it ever wants more; and it is seldom disappointed, for it

gains its ends more passively than actively, and its success depends on self, not on others; but this it is also that renders it so despicable. "Tell him his soul lives in an alley," said Ben Jonson, when Charles I. sent him a niggard gift. The souls of the avaricious live in the narrowest of all alleys; they are shut up in the dreariest solitary confinement, from which they have not the spirit to escape.

We contrived to peep at a few pictures. At Padua, we paid a hurried visit to one or two churches adorned by frescoes by some of the earlier masters, admirable for the artless gesture—the earnest, rapt expression—the power of shewing the soul breathing in the face. Every painter who aims at the ideal—at expressing the purer and higher emotions of the soul, ought to make a particular study of these early Christian paintings; they must not imitate them—true genius, indeed, cannot imitate. He can catch the light which the labours of his predecessors throw over his path; but he will proceed on one shaped out by himself. To imitate Perugino would be to write poetry in the obsolete language of Chaucer. Yet every English writer ought to be familiar with the pathos, sweetness, and delicate truth of one of our greatest poets.

I was sorry not to spend more time at Ferrara;

and in particular not to revisit the galleries, and palaces, and churches of Bologna. To have seen these once was no excuse for not seeing them again; but I could not.

I cannot say why, but the impression left on my mind of the passage of the Appenines had been unfavourable, and I was agreeably surprised to find the scenery far more varied—richer in wood, and more picturesque than I expected. The mountain inns are all much improved since I last crossed. Evening closed as the valley in which Florence is situated opened before us; the descent is rapid, ending almost at the gate of the city itself. We traversed it at its greatest length, from the Porta San Gallo to Schneiderff's Hotel, where very uncomfortable rooms were assigned to us.

This, and the expense of the hotel, made us eager to take apartments. I was instantly employed in the wearisome task of finding them. There are a great many, but still it was difficult to find such as we wanted. There were several numerous and handsome suites of rooms at a high price, and a great number of narrow and uncomfortable ones tolerably cheap. Neither suited us. We at last fixed on a second floor, on the Lungo l'Arno. The rooms are nearly all turned to the south, and look over the river: they are not large, but they are clean and

neat. We are sure of the sun whenever he shines; which is a great desideratum, especially in an Italian winter, when the presence of sunshine often admits of an absence of fire. We have engaged our rooms for four months. It is very cold—as cold as it can be in England.

NOVEMBER.

To cold has succeeded rain, with a few sunny days to break the dreariness of the season; but I believe you in England are enjoying fine weather, and, strange to say, we hear that in Rome and Naples the rain is still more continuous and chill. Walking is out of the question; and driving,—how I at once envy and despise the happy rich who have carriages, and who use them only to drive every afternoon in the Cascine—the Hyde Park of Florence. If I could, I would visit every spot mentioned in Florentine history—visit its towns of old renown; and ramble amid scenes familiar to Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Macchiavelli.

The fault of Florence is, that it is built in a basin, too entirely and too closely shut in by mountains, which collect the clouds, and render the air stagnant; so that it is hot in summer; and in winter, when there is snow on the Appenines, sharply cold. Now that there is no snow, the season being mild, we have the other alternative of rain and mist. Some-

times the Arno rises so high that it threatens a flood : on these occasions, it is watched and guarded like a wild beast, and every inch, as it rises, is proclaimed. I like to hear it, roaring and rushing in its course—

“ Per aver pace co' seguaci sui,”

as Dante says of the Po ; and any one witnessing the turbulence of these tideless Italian rivers when swollen by rains ; who views their precipitate speed, and listens to their thunder, as the mountain torrents, named by the poet their pursuers, come dashing after, to augment their fury—whoso sees this, is conscious that in this passage Dante displays his peculiar and high power of putting a sentient soul into nature, and representing it to our minds by images suggested by a quick and poetic feeling of her vitality.

During the intervals between the rainy days, the mists hang as dense and low over the city as they used to rest over the valley of Dolgelly during last year's wintry summer. But when the sun does shine, and when the smiles of Nature call me forth, I cross the Ponte alle Grazie—I leave the town by the gate of San Miniato, and ascend the steep hill to the platform before the little elegant church (San Miniato fuore delle mura) on which Michael Angelo delighted to fix his eyes, calling it “ *La bella villanella*.” From the height, you command a view of the city, crowned by dome and tower, of the Appenine that

slopes down to cradle it in its green lap ; and of the Arno, that, having forced its way among the mountains, now hurries on towards the marine plain. This view, and the climate also of Florence, was injured not many years ago, when the forests, that clothed the mountain sides, were cut down, to be replaced by the olive—a more profitable growth. But the removal of the forests opened the gullies of the hills ; took away the check formerly opposed to the violent tramontana ; which collects its strength on the snowy peaks, and rushes down the bared sides with mightier power.

I look on those glorious hills, and turn to a map of Italy, and long to lose myself in their depths, and to visit every portion of Tuscany ; every smaller town and secluded nook of which, is illustrious through historical association. It is my dream to set out some day on this ramble, and see places untrod by the usual tourist ; but now I cannot.

However, we could not resist the temptation of visiting Vallombrosa. It is true this is not the season for excursions, autumn being too far advanced ; but a fine day gave us promise, we hoped, for the same on the morrow : so we hired a *vettura* and set out.

The road skirts the river, and winds up the Valdarno, the slopes of whose inclosing hills are thickly studded with country seats. It was a

showery day ; but the sun shone at intervals, and brightened the stream and mountain sides. The road is new and good. At about one o'clock we reached a small town where a cattle fair was going on.* After some little delay, however, we got ponies and a guide, and proceeded. We now fell upon a true mountain path, winding up the hill beside a brawling torrent ; the crags rose high above, and the branches of noble forest-trees were spread over our path—truly they were in the sear and yellow leaf ; but the place was the more consonant with Milton's verse—

“Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
High over-arched embower.”

As we climbed higher, a shower of sleet came on, and we arrived wet through at the Convent. No women are admitted within these sacred walls, but a *forestiera* is built adjoining for our accommodation.

The grassy plain, or platform, before the Convent is at the head of a huge gully or ravine, which

* “What were the turkeys a pound ?” asked our guide of some peasants returning from the fair. “Seventeen quatrini,” was the reply. It requires a complex sum to reduce this to English value. There are five quatrini to a crazie—eight crazie in a paol—and a paol is about $5\frac{1}{4}d$; in addition, the turkeys were bought alive with their feathers on, and the Italian pound contains only twelve ounces. This was the market price in the country. Every edible pays a duty on entering Florence.

slopes down towards the valley of the Arno. A mist hung over the scene; but in summer-time it must be—what it is named—Paradise.

Vallombrosa is situated on the verge of the mountainous region of the Casentino. This district is little known; it vies with Switzerland or the Tyrol in beauty; covered by forests, resonant with streams, the valleys that intervene are green and fertile. Cortona is its capital. Its nobility is of high antiquity, and the peasantry are attached to it with a sort of feudal sense of vassalage.

We arrived wet through. The lay-brother made a good fire, and asked us what refreshment we would have. We had already dined, so he brought us some excellent coffee, and a *chasse* of *rosolio*, such as is only to be found distilled by the Monks of this Convent.

The rain made the scene dreary; but it ceased at last, and we mounted our ponies. The sun broke out as we descended; and the sparkling torrent murmured softly as it danced along. I hailed it with delight, as one of—

“ Li ruscelletti, che de' verdi colli
Del Casentin discendon giuso in Arno,
Facendo i lor canali e freddi e molli ;”—

Verses are these that might refresh a thirsty wanderer in a hot sandy desert. There is scarcely a

spot in Tuscany, and those parts of the North of Italy, which he visited, that Dante has not described in poetry that brings the very spot before your eyes, adorned with graces missed by the prosaic eye, and yet which are exact and in perfect harmony with the scene.

There are three convents, Vallombrosa, Calmaldoli, and Laverna, situated in the depths of the district of the Casentino, of which visitors make the tour. Monks of old were wise to choose spots of extreme beauty, however solitary, for their life of seclusion, peace, and praise.

LETTER XII.

Art at Florence.—Cosimo Rosselli.—Ghirlandajo.—Beato Fra Angelico.—Poccetti.—Later Florentine School.

JANUARY, 1843.

FLORENCE contains a multitude of various paintings, which to describe, or even to classify, would demand a volume, and would require a knowledge of the art, the elements even of which I do not possess. I have not the remotest pretension to being a connoisseur; nor do I say, as some have done, "I do not know what is called good, but I know what pleases me"—giving it to be understood, by these words, that they have an untaught instinct, transcending culture of the student. I believe, in all matters of art, good taste results from natural powers joined to familiarity with the best productions. To read sublime poetry, to hear excellent music, to view the finest pictures, the most admirable statues, and harmonious and stately architecture, is the best school in which to learn to appreciate what approaches nearest to perfection in each.

M. Rio satisfactorily proves that the modern art

of painting resulted from the piety of the age in which it had birth. The adoration of images—or, if that expression be too strong, the having recourse to images for the purpose of concentrating, vivifying, and exalting the faith of the worshippers—created a demand (to use a phrase of the day) for pictures on religious subjects. At first this was satisfied by paintings of the Byzantine school, to which custom gave sanctity. But when men of eminent piety, gifted with pictorial powers, turned their talents to representing bodily to the eye, the Saviour of the world, the chaste sinless mother of God, or saints, who through their faith form a portion of the hierarchy of heaven, and are admitted by the Judge to mediate for their fellow-creatures, they depicted all that their souls could conceive of sublime and holy in the face of man, seeking to present

“Of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.”*

It is with extreme delight that I have viewed some of the works of the elder Florentine painters, who excelled in portraying the human countenance lighted up by the nobler passions. Simplicity and innocence; rapt enthusiasm, or dignified repose, characterise their various productions. It has been remarked that Shakspeare's personages speak the very

* “Paradise Regained.”

words which we may imagine that *our noble selves* would say under the suggestions of certain passions, dispositions, and circumstances. So it may be said that every figure painted by these higher artists looks an individual chosen among our species for nobility of bearing and beauty of countenance, and that their attitude and look strictly belong to them. There is nothing theatrical nor affected, which is the Charybdis—nor anything constrained or inane, which may be termed the Scylla of the art.

Among the compositions eminent for the conjunction of the truth of nature and ideal beauty, is the fresco of Cosimo Rosselli, in the church of Saint Ambrosio. The subject is the translation of the miraculous chalice to the episcopal palace. It is replete with figures of various aspect, but all expressive of the sentiment of worship and admiration proper to the occasion. There is a group of women in particular, which, if such lived and assembled in the churches of Florence, show that personal beauty and graceful dignity then existed among the sex in a degree unparalleled elsewhere. But these evidently are not mere portraits; and the painter, though accustomed to associate with a race occupied by nobler thoughts and desires than now for the most part harbour in the brain and heart of women, yet idealised his actual experiences.

There is another picture of this age, which to see, is to feel the happiness which the soul receives from objects presented to the eye, that kindle and elevate the imagination. It represents the Adoration of the Magi, by Ghirlandajo, in the chapel of an hospital in the Piazza della Annunziata. There is one of the Kings standing on one side of the Virgin, which might (as the Apollo Belvidere is said to have done), create a passion in a woman's heart. Where on earth find a man so full of majesty, gentleness, and feeling? There is a charming accessory to this picture. In the back-ground is represented the Murder of the Innocents, in all its terror; but immediately in the fore-ground, on each side of the Virgin, kneel two children—the souls of the Innocents who died for Christ, and are redeemed by him. The attitude of these babes, especially of one, has that inexpressible charm of innocence which words cannot convey, and which since the creation of man, the pencil has seldom been able to depict.

Led by the admiration which this picture excited, I visited every other in Florence by Ghirlandajo; they mostly bear the stamp of the power I have mentioned. Vasari, albeit of a different school, praises him highly, but chiefly for the naturalness and truth with which he portrayed the feelings; and speaks of the wonder excited by those effects,

and the pleasure they produced in the beholders. Describing one of the paintings in a chapel of the Church of the Santa Trinità, at Florence, representing the Death of St. Francis, and the grief of the monks, he says, "there is one friar who kisses his hand; and it is not possible, in painting, better to pourtray the expression; and there is besides a bishop, with spectacles on, who is singing vespers, not hearing whom is the only testimony that it is a mere painting."

Lanzi speaks of his perfection of outline, grace of attitude, truth of ideas, and of his facility and rare diligence. He was the master of Michael Angelo; and, it is said, envying the talents his pupil displayed, contrived that he should quit painting for sculpture. But this, I have no doubt, is a calumny. He is one of the most prolific among the early Florentine painters; but, among his many pictures, I liked none so well as the Adoration of the Magi I before mentioned, and the Life of St. Francis, in a chapel dedicated to this Saint, in the Church of the Santa Trinità.

The Beato Fra Angelico surpasses all his contemporaries in the celestial sweetness he infuses into the countenances of his saints and angels. We may believe ourselves regarding the blessed in the kingdom of heaven, as we look at these creations

of a mind cradled in love, charity, and devotion. Fra Giovanni, of Fiesole, known as the blessed Fra Angelico, presents in his life the very type of a Christian ecclesiastic. He gave himself wholly up to piety and good works. His humility was such, that when Pope Nicholas V. desired to make him Archbishop of Florence, he represented to his Holiness that he did not feel himself formed to govern the many, and implored him to name another more worthy in his stead. "It appears, from this holy man," says Vasari, "that the monks of his time did not desire to obtain those burthensome honours which they did not think that they could worthily fulfil, and were ready to yield them to others whom they judged more capable—as did this truly angelic father, who spent his life in the service of God, and in benefiting the world and his neighbour; and what more can be desired by man than by living holily to attain the kingdom of heaven, and acting worthily to acquire eternal fame on earth." Fra Angelico was no lazy priest—besides his works elsewhere, Florence abounds with lovely images whose serene and blessed faces breathe the virtues of their author. The delicacy and softness for which he is remarkable never degenerates into insipidity. His pure taste made him conceive the highest beauty, his faith gave him a foretaste of beatitude, and he adorned with

these attributes the beings whom alone he consented to represent, the saints and angels of Paradise.*

We had a curious scene in the sacristy of the church of Santa Maria Novella, whither we went to hunt for one of the works of this angelic artist; the reliquaries mentioned by M. Rio; consisting of two tablets painted with a series of miniatures, representing the Life of Jesus Christ; the Last Judgment, in which the beatitude of the elect appears in all its living ecstacy, and St. Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great, surrounded by their disciples. For a long time the keys could not be found of the closet in which these reliquaries were deposited; and a most active hunt after them was made. At length they came to light, and the tablets were brought out. The Dominican, who took every pains to find them for us, had lately arrived from Rome, and had never seen them. His almost childish delight, as he regarded the inexpressible loveliness of these exquisite miniatures, was highly amusing. Whenever you have to do with an Italian, you do not encounter the doltish ignorance

* "The compunction of man's heart—its aspirations towards God—the rapt ecstacy—a foretaste of celestial beatitude—all that class of profound and exalted emotions which no artist can represent without having previously experienced them, formed, as it were, the mysterious circle which the genius of Fra Angelico delighted to follow, and when ended, he recommenced with renewed delight."—*La Poesie Chretienne*.

of an English clown, nor the dogged sullenness of a German. He takes pleasure in your pleasure, and interests himself in the objects which are exciting your interest, in a manner at once gratifying to us and honourable to himself.

Of a later age is Poccetti, unnamed by Vasari, because, when he wrote, he had not painted the pictures which render him one of the most admirable fresco painters in the world: Florence is full of his works, and every one may be visited with pleasure and profit, for he depicts Nature in her truth and yet in her elegance;—if that word denotes the power of displaying in the demeanour and attitude, and countenances of men, their souls defecated of every meaner quality—dignified through unaffected self-forgetfulness—animated by charity—beaming with faith.—One of his most renowned works is a series of frescos in the cloister of the convent of the Santissima Annunziata: they represent the conversion, holy life, and death, of seven Florentine gentlemen, who dedicated themselves to religion under the name of *Servi di Maria*. The aspect and bearing of these holy men mark them as gentlemen in the best sense of the word. Men, “generous, brave, and gentle;” and, in addition, animated by earnest benevolence towards their fellow-creatures, and lively faith towards the divinity. Perhaps, however, the most

admirable of his works is the cupola of a chapel, belonging to the church and convent of Santa Maria degli Angioli. It is painted in fresco, and represents the Saints of the Old and New Testament; the more beautiful portion is the congregation of female saints—Saint Cecilia, the musician; Saint Clara, the nun; Saint Catherine, the bride of Christ, &c. The foreshortening is admirable, the spirit and grace of the attitudes worthy of the highest masters of the art.*

Such is the spirit that animates the earlier school of Florence. But as painting became more of an art, and grew to represent domestic scenes and portraits, artists broke from the confinement of mere religious subjects, or treated them in a mundane manner. Then it was that their imagination so degenerated, that they had recourse to portraits to represent Christ, the Virgin, and the Saints; some of them even fell so far from the ideal of sinless chastity, as to paint their mistresses and women of unworthy life; offering to the worship of the pious, the image of mere physical beauty, without the superior grandeur of moral excellence.

* "The Guide-Book of Florence," by Fantozzi, is very complete, but it wants an index of the names of the artists, with the numbers of the pages in which they are mentioned, cited, to enable the amateur at once to learn where to find their various works.

I must confess, that any rules (except the immutable laws of moral rectitude) that tend to limit the objects on which man is to exercise his faculty of the imagination, appear to me contrary to the scope of our creation. We are so far from being all born possessed of equal powers of mind, that since the world began there has been scarcely a hundred among us capable of the higher flights of the intellect. How few possess, in any degree, the capacity of becoming painters, and far fewer are those who are able to rise to an exalted order of art. We ought to know what the highest is,—that those who feel the power should endeavour to elevate themselves to it; but beauty may be found elsewhere, and must not be rejected. Bigotry is ever to be eschewed in all that pertains to man; to confine painters to one class of pictures, is to turn some who would be great, if allowed to originate subjects of a lower grade, into tame copyists, and humble, lifeless imitators of the thoughts of others. As well insist that all poets should write hymns and heroic poetry, as that painters should confine the pencil to the delineation of the conceptions of religious mysticism.

The genuine school of Christian idealism is, for the present, come to an end. And I confess, as far as I may be allowed to judge, that it strikes me that the

Germans of the present day, who are endeavouring to revive it, fall into the same mistake as our sculptors, who employ themselves in imitating the ancients;—they are good copyists, but are never original. And what appears to prove this is, that the Germans are not content with endeavouring to reproduce that composed and severe expression which the earlier painters yet knew how to ally to vitality in its highest sense, but they return to the dry colouring and meagre composition, which is the chief defect of the infancy of painting.

Still, there can be no question that in poetry, music, or the plastic arts, the ideal must rank above the merely imitative. Those painters who can embody ideas conceived in their purest and most elevated contemplations, far removed from vulgar and trivial reality, are the greatest. Artists, however, are men formed by nature with the peculiar eye to see and represent form and colour; and it is not strange that the majority among them should turn to the study of these, and view in the perfection of representing the one or the other, the aim of their labours. Thus the study of nature succeeded to the ideal; art fell lower afterwards, and became the copyist of art; and ancient statues grew to be the models from which modern painters strove to gain inspiration, till the uniformity, stiffness, and even

deformity thus produced, induced others, who perceived these faults and their cause, to have again recourse to nature.

But these remarks tend beyond the limits of my knowledge, or even powers of observation. I have mentioned pictures not much visited except by the curious, just to shew the way towards, not to guide you (for I cannot), in your search after pictorial excellence: nor will I long detain you in the more beaten road of the public galleries.

LETTER XIII.

The Gallery.—Palazzo Pitti.—Le Belle Arti.—Portrait of Dante.—
The Churches.

WITH slow steps my feet almost unwillingly first moved to the collection in the Reali Uffizi. As I entered the Tribune I felt a crowd of associations rise up around me, gifted with painful vitality. I was long lost in tears. But novelty seems all in all to us weak mortals; and when I revisited these rooms, these saddest ghosts were laid; the affliction calmed, and my mind was free to receive new impressions.

The Tribune is adorned with the selected *chef-d'œuvre* of the best artists of every school, in addition to some of the finest ancient sculpture in the world. The matchless statue of the Queen of Beauty reigns over the whole—Venus, majestic in her bending softness, which once to see does not reveal its perfection. There is here one of the most beautiful of Raphael's Madonnas—one of the eight which M. Rio mentions as among the *chef-d'œuvre* that Raphael executed in the short interval of two years, during which he especially dedicated

himself to multiplying representations of the Virgin, for whom from childhood he had felt an especial devotion.*

Here is the master-piece of Andrea del Sarto, a painter of very high, though not the highest, merit. He wants warmth of colouring, fire of expression, and variety of invention; while he has been named *Andrea senza Errori*, from the purity of his outlines, the graceful decorum of his personages, and the faultless completeness of every portion of his pictures.

Perfection in drawing, of which Michael Angelo was the great master, is the leading merit of the subsequent Florentine school. It has not the glowing colouring of the Venetian, nor possesses artists to compare with Raphael, Correggio, or Leonardo da Vinci. Michael Angelo was its most glorious example—a man whom I do not dare criticize; whom I will wait to mention till I have seen the

* The eight which M. Rio mentions as having seen himself, and as forming the glory of Raphael, as a painter of ideal and pure beauty, are—the Virgin, of the Duke of Alba—purchased afterwards by Mr. Coswelt, and brought to London.—The Virgin, known under the name of *La Belle Jardinière*, now in the Louvre.—The Virgin of Palazzo Tempi, now at Munich.—The Virgin of Canigiani, at Munich.—The two in the gallery of Florence, which, for the lovers of this style, dim the glory of every other picture—especially that named the Madonna of the Goldfinch.—Of this M. Rio says, “It may be boldly affirmed that Christian art never rose to a greater height.”—The Virgin of the Colonna Palace, now at Berlin; that of the Palazzo Gregori; and the Madonna of Pescia, known as the Madonna del Baldachino.

Sistine Chapel, at Rome ; to whose majestic powers of conception every connoisseur bears testimony, while still there is something of extravagant—something which is not absolute beauty—in most of his works at Florence. The glorious Medicean monuments,—

• “Where the gigantic shapes of Night and Day,
 Turned into stone, rest everlastingly ;
 Yet still are breathing.”*

—in spite of the magic art which makes them for ever sit and sleep, yet jar with the sense of harmony in form. His love of the naked was carried to a curious excess. In the Tribune, is a Holy Family, into which he has introduced a variety of naked figures in different attitudes, that have not the smallest connection with the subject of the picture, but intrude impertinently to mar its effect.

A charming Madonna of Correggio, kneeling beside the divine infant, adorns the Tribune ; there is also the portrait termed the Fornarina of Raphael ; certainly it is not the Fornarina, for it does not at all resemble her undoubted portraits, and it has been doubted whether the picture be by Raphael. From the Tribune, which, as a focus, collects the rarest and brightest rays of art, branch off several rooms, divided into schools. One of the most interesting is that containing the portraits of painters, by themselves.

* Rogers's “Italy.”

There is a stately chamber, dedicated to the Niobe and her children, whose maternal, remediless grief sheds a solemn sadness around. The Florentine school possesses specimens of its worst style, the inane, expressionless nudities of Vasari and his imitators. In the room of bronzes is the model of the Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini, and there is something more spirited and graceful in his attitude than in the larger bronze in the Piazza. There is the model of the glorious statue of John of Bologna, which Shakespeare we might think had seen when he spoke of the "herald Mercury;" and a David of Donatello, neither imitated from ancient sculpture, nor conceived under their inspiration. There is all the verve of an original idea; the youthful hero is neither Mars nor Hercules; he is the inspired Hebrew shepherd boy, who derived his victory from his faith. The galleries which run round three sides of the square, from which open the various rooms, are hung with many pictures, and adorned by a series of the busts of the Roman Emperors, and by a number of statues. Just below the cornice is a range of highly interesting portraits. Paul Jovius had made a vast collection of original portraits of all the illustrious personages of his time, and placed them in the palace of the Conte Giovio at Como. Cosimo I. sent a painter, celebrated for his portraits, Cristofaro

dell' Altissimo, to make copies, and these are here hung up.

With the exception of the Tribune, the collection in the Pitti Palace exceeds that of the gallery. There are here pictures from every school; and by going often, and selecting beforehand the master whose works I wished to see, I have spent many a morning with delight. Once or twice I have gone merely to refresh my eyes with a marine view—a sunset by Salvator Rosa; it is a picture all calm, all softness, all glowing beauty; and, during the misty and darker days of this *unsouthern* winter, I have gone—as I would in England—to warm my heart and imagination by the golden hues of a sunnier and purer atmosphere.

The gallery of the Belle Arti is rich in paintings of the olden times, when the soul worked more than the hand; when the artist sought, in the first place, to conceive the sublime, and the glorious endeavour bore him aloft among the angels and saints, whose blissful ecstasies he was enabled to represent. Why did not some among these great artists portray the other passions that ennoble our nature? We have portraits of great men, worthy of them, it is true; but the ideal of the warrior who would die for his country—nay, I may say, of the lover who loves unto the death—the representation of such men and women

as Milton and Shakspeare have embodied in verse, is not to be found in the works of these painters; or only found, because among their groups of worshippers at some miracle, we see the power of great actions sit upon the brow, and add majesty to the gesture of some among them. When they portrayed earthly love, they betook themselves to mythology, and depicted passion, without the touch of tender fear which must ever mingle with, and chasten the affection we feel one for another. As far as I remember, there is no picture such as would idealise Ferruccio Ferruccini or Bayard—nor can I recollect the representation of mutual and tender love in any picture by a great artist, with one exception—that called the Three Ages of Man, by Titian—the original of which is in the Bridgewater collection; and there is a fine copy in Palazzo Manfrin, at Venice. The expression of the lover's face seems to say, "I love a creature who is mortal, and for whose safety I fear; yet in her life I live—without her I die;" and she catches the light of tenderness from his eyes, and the two souls seem fused in one commingling glance; but there is nothing to shock the most bashful mind—love is evidently hallowed by that enduring affection which is proof against adversity, and looks beyond the

One of the most interesting paintings in the world has been lately discovered at Florence; the portrait of Dante, by his friend Giotto. Vasari mentions that Giotto was employed to paint the walls of the chapel of the Palace of the Podesta at Florence, and that he introduced into his picture a portrait of his contemporary and dear friend, Dante Alighieri, in addition to other renowned citizens of the time. This palace has been turned to the unworthy use of a public prison, and the desecrated chapel was whitewashed, and divided into cells. These have now been demolished, and the whitewash is in process of being removed. Almost at the first the portrait of Dante was discovered: he makes one in a solemn procession, and holds a flower in his hand. Before it vanishes all the preconceived notions of the crabbed severity of his physiognomy, which have originated in portraits taken later in his life. We see here the lover of Beatrice. His lip is proud—for proud, every contemporary asserts that he was—and he himself confesses it in the *Purgatorio*; but there is sensibility, gentleness and love; the countenance breathes the spirit of the *Vita Nuova*.*

* The common prints taken from this picture are very unworthy of it; they seem to substitute sensuality for sensibility, in the lines of the countenance. Mr. Kirkup's drawing, made for Lord Vernon, is excel-

I often visit the various churches of Florence. The old paintings to be found in them attract me; but you must not imagine that the interior of these Florentine cathedrals and churches is to be compared to our Gothic edifices. The space within a large building of this sort often defies the talent of the architect: the Greek temples had but small interior shrines. Their rows of columns may be said to bear resemblance to the trunks of trees; while the capital, and architrave, and roof, does not imitate the shadowy boughs, though their purpose is the same. Gothic architecture, on the contrary, resembles the over-arching branches, and imparts the same solemn tranquillity as the aspect of a venerable avenue or darksome glade. The Italian architects seem not to have known well what to do with the vast space enclosed by the majestic walls of their edifices. They afforded glorious room for the painter; but where not adorned by him, they are bare, presenting no image of beauty, and inspiring no solemn feeling. The pictures and sculpture we find are,

lent. Unfortunately, in removing the whitewash or plaster, a slight injury was done to the eye in the picture. The painter employed by the Grand Duke has restored this; but Mr. Kirkup is indignant with the restoration; and the print, taken from his drawing, exhibits the blemish. I confess, that to me the restoration seems judicious. The ball of the eye alone was injured; and as the colour of Dante's eyes was known from other pictures, the portrait has gained in expression, and not lost in authenticity by its being repainted.

however, sources of ever new delight ; it is here that we may study the infancy and progress of the art—here also, alas! we may perceive its degeneracy—till, last at worst of all, we see raising to the walls, on which marvellous frescoes are fading away, daubs that—I am not fond of ill-natured criticism, so will say no more.

Let us turn, rather, to the gates of the Batistero, worthy of Paradise. Here we view all that man can achieve of beautiful in sculpture, when his conceptions rise to the height of grace, majesty, and simplicity. Look at these, and a certain feeling of exalted delight will enter at your eyes and penetrate your heart, which is the praise to which a painter or a sculptor aspires. Nor forget when you visit the church of Santa Croce, to look at some fast-fading frescoes, on the loggie of a palace, on the right hand of the piazza. The perfect taste exhibited in the ease and dignity of attitude and gesture of the figures will well reward you for careful examination.

LETTER XIV

The Carbonari.

OF late years there has been a spirit in Italy tending towards improvement ; this, perhaps, is less outwardly developed in Florence than elsewhere, yet here also it exists. Politically and materially considered, Tuscany is looked upon as the best governed and happiest Italian state, but in some respects this happy circumstance has kept back its inhabitants. The foreign power that rules Lombardy exciting undisguised hatred, and the misrule of the Popes being beyond all question quite intolerable—the people of those states are in avowed opposition to government, while in Tuscany there is little to complain of, beyond the torpedo influence of a system of things that undeviatingly tends towards the deterioration.

The reign of Leopold I. was the golden age of Florence. He was grandduke at a time when a good sovereign was the dearest wish of a people, and the notion of governing themselves was not looked upon

even as desirable. The French came next, and the tendency of their government was always to destroy the nationality of any people subdued by them. But this had a certain good effect in Italy. The curse of that country is its divisions,—while the other nations of Europe, in the middle ages, became divided into feudal tenures, and possessed by nobles, who, unable to maintain their independence, at last became mere courtiers of an absolute monarch,—Italy was divided into municipal republics, or small states,—the mutual rivalry and quarrels of which were the fatal causes that France and Spain disputed alternately, making Italy their field of battle, and Italian met Italian in opposing fight; and Pisa was willing to abase Florence; and Bologna gloried in the misfortunes of Ferrara:—the union of the whole of northern Italy under the French was the first circumstance that checked a spirit so inimical to all prosperity,—all improvement.

When the French were driven from Italy the peninsula became politically Austrian. The Austrian cabinet directed all the councils, and guided every act of the various states. If Ferdinand contrived to maintain a more beneficent internal government, it was only because the Tuscans shewed no inclination to join in the revolutionary movement. But while Austria substantially ruled the

whole, it was well aware of the benefit to be derived from disunion, and it stirred up the spirit of discord by a curious contrivance ;—a tub was thrown to the whale ;—the government ordered the institute of Milan to occupy itself in the reform of the National Dictionary, and hence arose a fierce battle between the Della Crusca Academy and the authors of the “Proposta” on the score of language. Did the Italians speak Tuscan, or Italian? such was the mighty question that engrossed the learned of Italy ; it was never started among two or three men without exciting the most violent party feeling, and for many years it set Tuscan against Lombard. Monti, by no means a pure political character, is accused of undertaking this war to please the Austrians, with his eyes open to the end in view. His son-in-law, Perticari, who shewed himself very earnest in the discussion, was too much honoured and loved, his memory is too entirely revered, for him to be open to the same accusation. For seven years the battle raged, exciting a virulence of party and municipal feeling, quite inexplicable out of Italy. It ended at last, as the question of big-endians and small-endians terminated in Liliput, by every one breaking his egg at whichever end he pleased ;—the Lombards came to the conclusion that the Tuscans might like their language best if they chose—and they must choose, for it is not only the purest and the most idiomatic, but it

is the only language at once spoken and written, except, indeed, the Roman; but that is very inferior in strength and vivacity.

Other influences were at work in Italy to turn the Italians from such puerile contests. The sect of the Carbonari had spread throughout the peninsula, and the hope of throwing off a foreign yoke and achieving more liberal institutions animated every Italian heart.

Colletta, in speaking of the Carbonari, considers this sect to be derived from the Freemasons of Germany—transported into their country by the Neapolitan exiles of 1799, on their return. I have heard Italians well versed in the secrets of Carbonarism deny this. They say that the deeply religious and mystic spirit of the sect at its commencement, proves its Neapolitan origin, and that it was founded by men, Neapolitans themselves, who knew how to adapt their doctrines and their rites to the temperament of a people, at once superstitious and lovers of the marvellous.

The hopes of political liberty which all nations entertained when the armies of the allies quailed before those of republican France, found an echo in Naples; while Ferdinand and his queen, who before the French Revolution had shown an inclination to imitate Joseph and Leopold of Austria, in reforming the laws of their kingdom, taking sudden fright, indulged in such acts

of arbitrary power as incited rather than repressed the desire for change. Many Neapolitans, therefore, welcomed the French with enthusiasm, and rejoiced in the flight of their sovereign. The liberators, as they delighted to call themselves, soon, however, showed the cloven foot, and appeared in their true light, of invaders and spoilers. The hearts of all real lovers of their country were alienated from them; and if Ferdinand, on his return, during Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, when the French were driven from Italy, had shewn himself moderate and forgiving, he had acquired the affection of all his subjects. But both he and his queen seemed to be driven mad by hatred and terror of the new doctrine of a people's *right* to be well governed. Executions—the most barbarous imprisonments—persecutions that, blinded by fury, rather attacked a friend than forgave an enemy, followed their restoration. All the constitutionalists or republicans fled—some to France, Germany, or Switzerland, some to the wild and pathless mountains of the Abruzzi and the Calabrias.

When the French returned, the situation of the exiles was not mended; and many among them continued to dwell in unknown and savage retreats, among the inaccessible mountains and solitary valleys of those regions. They lived without any bond to

unite them together, yet not so isolated but that they frequently met, and communicated to each other their hopes and projects. More than the Bourbon who had persecuted them, they hated the usurpation of the stranger. The most earnest desire of their hearts was to drive the French from their country, while some among them, looking beyond that time, revolved the means of strengthening their party, so that a republic might be instituted; or, at any rate, if Ferdinand returned, that he should be forced to concede just and free institutions to his people.

Among the refugees of Calabria, who were not to be subdued by persecution and adversity, was a young man of high courage, strong understanding, and gifted with wonderful powers of persuasion. Capo Bianco had first appeared as the bold leader of the militia of his native place (in Calabria), and had won the love, respect, and blind obedience of his followers. He possessed all the qualities belonging to the head and founder of a sect. I am told that he was handsome in person, and courteous in manners, but of a stern and inflexible disposition; severe towards delinquents, gentle and kind to the inoffensive, and to his friends. He added enthusiasm to these qualities, or he would never have erected himself into the founder of a sect. He abhorred the name of king—not because he had

been persecuted by his sovereign, but because the power of royalty was detestable in his eyes—so that not one among his followers ever dared name before him Napoleon or Ferdinand ; Austrian or French. He would consent only to republican institutions for his country ; he desired the same government to prevail all over Italy, and argued warmly in favour of Italian union and independence. Such was Capo Bianco, as he is represented by the friends who survived him : he was the founder of the most celebrated sect of modern times, and died on the scaffold, a martyr to the cause he advocated.

Capo Bianco had taken shelter in a spot, to which he gave the strength of a rocky fortress, among the most rugged fastnesses of the hither Calabria ; he there defied the power of his enemies. Nor did he remain shut up : he frequently called together and appeared among his faithful adherents ; and, communicating his bold projects, and warming them by his persuasive eloquence, he induced them to believe that the hour was come when they might unite with the population of their country, to throw off the detested yoke of the French usurpation.

The Carbonari, who have survived a time now almost forgotten, relate how, in the silence of a dark night, Capo Bianco assembled his most attached friends near a poor hut, situated in the depth of a

thick forest, and there laid the first stone of the edifice of his sect. He explained its principles and its spirit, and caused them to swear a fearful secrecy on the cross. From this focus the new association spread, guarded by tremendous oaths, and by menaces of a dreadful vengeance to be taken upon traitors; by all the precaution, resolution and terror, that its originator could devise. He gave his adherents the name of Carbonari, because the society was founded in a district principally inhabited by charcoal burners; and men who followed that trade were among the first, appertaining to the lower classes, who were initiated into the secrets of the sect. They, descending from the mountains for the purposes of traffic, carried with them and propagated, wherever they went, the tenets of their founder.

Capo Bianco understood the disposition of his countrymen, and gave a religious and mystic colouring to his society. Striking rites were established; the initiation was terrible; the lessons taught often apparently abstruse; the end was single—to overturn monarchy in all its forms, and erect republics on the ruin of thrones. To attain this among a people pious to superstition, it was necessary to mingle mystic tenets with political opinions; in short, to erect and disseminate a *political religion*; and thus, not long ago, Carbo-

narism was professed, and found proselytes among the mountains of Corsica and Sardinia. The laws of the Carbonari were, they declared, founded on the equality of the gospel, and on the traditions of Freemasonry. The initiated swore to take terrible vengeance for the Lamb, sacrificed by the Wolves. The religion of Christ was the lamb; kings were typified in the wolves. They said that Jesus, who was the Word of God, had been the first who proclaimed upon earth the abolition of ancient servitude, and taught brotherhood and equality among men. He was therefore crucified by the wolves of his age, and died an illustrious victim of tyranny. The Carbonari swore to vindicate the death of Christ, and to exterminate the race of wolves, that is of kings, who inherited the guilt and infamy of the assassins of the Son of God. To strike the vulgar eye, fearful representations were made in their ceremonies, apt to excite the imaginations of a southern people of a highly religious temperament, and the proselytes pronounced tremendous oaths upon the cross and the dagger. The initiation was accompanied by various circumstances calculated to test the moral and physical courage of the novices; and the slightest sign of shrinking, caused them to be irrevocably rejected.

The Carbonari had, like the Freemasons,

distinctive grades in their society; they recognised each other by mysterious signs, and called themselves by a secret name—that of “Buoni Cugini,” or good cousins. They took an oath to succour, at their need, every other Carbonaro, and to defend the honour of their women. They swore, if ever they themselves became traitors, to consent that their bodies should be torn to pieces, burnt, and the ashes cast to the winds; that their name should be cursed, and become a warning to all the Carbonari scattered over the face of the earth.

Carbonarism took deep root and spread rapidly. At one time, Murat was induced to look upon it as a means for civilising the wild Calabrians, and to regard it with favour. But the sect hated the French too much for this to continue. Ferdinand, meanwhile, in his retreat at Naples, spared no endeavour to disturb the government of the invader, and, if possible, to drive him from the kingdom. Banditti were enrolled; a crusade preached by the churchmen among the ignorant peasantry; and a civil war ensued, at the horrors of which the heart sickens. He heard of the growing power of the Carbonari, and had recourse to them.

Already, indeed, led by Capo Bianco, the Carbonari had assembled in arms in the neighbourhood of Catanzaro; they scoured the country, attacked

the towns, drove out the partisans of the French, and, raising a cry that the reign of Joachim had come to an end, they hoisted the tri-coloured flag of the sect, and set up wherever they could republican institutions. Become strong in the places of which they had possessed themselves, they sent letters and emissaries to every *vendita*, inciting the sectaries to raise the standard of liberty and come to their aid. Capo Bianco was the soul of all, and inflamed their zeal by his eloquence. "My Italian brothers," he cried, "you are the slaves of the French. You have changed masters, but not your state. Your new rulers,—prouder, more insolent, and more rapacious than those of old,—give you no repose, and you lavish without advantage your possessions, your own and your children's lives! Will you remain slaves—the scorn and mock of the stranger, who heaps wrongs upon you—the victims of the insolence and rapine of a lawless soldiery?" It were long to recount all the arguments of the chief. He concluded by telling them that if they joined his forces, they would command victory, and Italy, liberated, would acquire greater splendour and power than she had ever before enjoyed. "The destiny of our unfortunate country," he concluded, "is in your hands; and posterity will either bless or curse you for your deeds."

While this was going on at one place, Ferdinand had given it in charge to Prince Moliterno, who was at the head of the royal forces in Calabria, to treat with other leaders of the sect, and invite them to espouse his cause. The Prince had ever professed republican principles; and even then, while heading an army in the name of Ferdinand, liberty and the union and independence of Italy were the watchwords he adopted. He endeavoured to persuade the chiefs of the sect that, by using their influence to drive out Murat, they would acquire such power as would force Ferdinand on his restoration to give his people a constitution, as, indeed, he had passed his royal word to do. Many of the Carbonari, although at that time the society was the mark of persecution of the French Government, shrunk from alliance with a sovereign, whom they knew to be in his heart a despot; while others among them gave ear to his promises, and joined the royalists. Both parties, royalists and Carbonari, while they thought it necessary to unite to drive out the French, fostered the secret hope that the victory once gained over the stranger, they could easily get rid of their confederate. Capo Bianco, however, never yielded, nor gave ear to the emissaries of the King. "You mistake," he said to those of his partisans who took the other course; "and whether the royalists are

victorious or defeated, you sharpen the sword that will destroy you; and build the scaffold on which I and my partisans will inevitably perish.”

Calabria was convulsed by these various parties; every portion of it was in arms; and its rivers ran red with blood. Then, as is usually the case in countries which are the prey of civil war, the evil was increased by the crimes of ferocious and lawless men, who collected in bands and ravaged the country, intent only on booty, and ever ready to destroy. For two years Calabria could be said to belong neither to the French, nor to Ferdinand, nor to the Carbonari: each had the upper hand by turns, and were, therefore, unable to clear the country of the brigands that infested it. This state of things could not continue, and the French Government resolved by extraordinary and terrible measures to root out the banditti, and to include the widespread and powerful sect of the Carbonari in the destruction. The atrocious and sanguinary methods by which General Manhes succeeded in extirpating the brigands is matter of history. Colletta recounts it in his usual graphic and vigorous manner. In his pages* you will find related also how Capo Bianco was deceived, betrayed, and executed, to the

* Colletta, *Storia del Reame di Napoli*, dal 1735, sino al 1825. Libro vii. cap. 53.

shame of the French General, Iannelli, who laid the snare by which he was entrapped. He died with heroic firmness; intrepid and calm, he willingly gave his life for the country and cause which he devotedly loved. Colletta, though no friend to the Carbonari, and accused of being a partisan of the French, yet reprobates the conduct of Murat towards the sect. "The violence and severity exercised towards the brigands," he says, "ought not to have been turned against the Carbonari, for the bandits were guilty of crimes—the sect demanded laws; the brigands were the refuse of society—the Carbonari were honourable and honest men. Carbonarism degenerated afterwards—but was then innocent; it had been invited and approved by Government, and its rites and tenets were civilised and beneficent. Many friends of Joachim begged him to disarm Carbonarism by mild and judicious measures; but anger, which was powerful in him, prevailed, and kept him firm in his evil counsels."

During and after the fall of Murat and the return of the Bourbon dynasty, Carbonarism, which had never been destroyed, spread; and while the restored king assumed at once despotic power, the sect, finding every promise of freedom for Italy broken, were the more zealous to acquire partisans,

and to labour for the union and independence of their unfortunate country.

Do not think that I advocate any secret society : the principle is bad. The crown of every virtuous act and feeling is, not to fear the light of day. But it must be remembered with what fearful odds the Italians have to contend ; they have not only openly against them the whole fabric of their various governments, backed by an overpowering foreign army ; but a secret society is spread throughout the country, the friend of existing institutions ;—the confessional is an engine of mighty power, diffused through every portion of every city, the most populous ; entering every hut, the most retired ; acting on the fears of the timid and the credulity of the superstitious ; pandering to the bad passions of the wicked and awakening the scruples of the pious. Every priest bids his penitents confess, not only their participation in any act or thought inimical to the church or to the government—not only to denounce father, husband, or child, who might trust to them the secret of their lives—but to reveal every little circumstance that may tend to discover the lovers of liberty. Can it be wondered that men who wished to regenerate their country in the face of so penetrating, so almost omnipotent a power, should cloak themselves in impenetrable secrecy, and strive to

check the influence by counter-terrors,—equally awful?

Fearful deeds were the result of the laws of the society; the individuals that composed it, knowing themselves to be supported by numerous companions, and sheltered from detection by the secrecy that veiled their name, lost their moral sense. The act, commanded by a power to which they had sworn obedience, ceased to be a crime, and assassination was no longer looked on as a murder, but as an execution; numbers of Carbonari, suspected or really guilty of treason to their oaths, were assassinated all over Italy, especially during the latter days of the society; and volumes might be filled with the history of these tragedies. If any man to whom the lot fell to execute the sentence of the rest, shrunk from his task, he was considered a traitor, and condemned to death.* Such was Carbonarism, at the time when it shook kings on their thrones, and made the sovereigns of Italy tremble. Calabria

* A young aspirant was asked, during the progress of his initiation, whether, if commanded by the society, he would put his own father to death. He answered, "Yes." He was taken to a room where, by some contrivance it seemed to him that he saw his father sitting at a table shading his eyes with his hand. A dagger was given him: "Your father is a traitor to the sect," he was told, "strike!" The weapon fell from the youth's hand; in an instant he was blindfolded—hurried away—set free in some distant spot—rejected from the sect, as incapable of that devotion to the cause which was demanded of its members.

and the Abruzzi swarmed with sectarians ; the society was rapidly propagated throughout the kingdom of Naples, whence it spread to Romagna, Piedmont, and Lombardy ; *Vendite** were even established in fair and tranquil Tuscany. Every *Vendita* was a permanent conspiracy,—every Carbonaro an enemy to the reigning authority ;—yet even sovereigns were their accomplices, since they had made use of the society to overthrow the dominion of the French in Italy.

The early Carbonari were men who were actuated by deep-rooted love of their country, and detestation of the vice, ignorance, and slavery into which Italy had fallen ; they entertained the belief that means terrible and unflinching could alone regenerate a people sunk in superstition and slavery. The triumph of the Carbonari was the proclamation of the constitutional government at Naples. But even then the sect was no longer the same. It had transgressed against the great and permanent moral laws by which society ought to be governed ; it had been guilty of crimes—now it sunk into feebleness. Its results fell miserably short of its proud promise ; for its work had

* The spots where the Carbonari assembled were called *Vendite*—or Places for Sale—in accordance with the fiction of their being sellers of charcoal. Thus, as we should write over a shop “Charcoal sold here ;” in Italian, the phrase is, “Vendita di Carbone.” Where there was one *Vendita*, there could be no other within four miles ;—if another was established within these limits, a schism ensued, and every endeavour was made to put it down.

been undertaken by men who were not sufficiently prepared,—who did not look to the future ;—who were often swayed by violent and capricious passions, and whose principles were rooted in scepticism. The pure patriotism of its originators became tainted by the personal ambition of their followers. At the very height of its success it was ignominiously vanquished. Unable, from whatever cause, to resist the Austrian invasion of Naples, in 1820—21, the constitution they had erected was overthrown, despotism re-established, and the chiefs of the Carbonari either fled, or died on the scaffold ;—the name became the mark for persecution.

Still the spirit of the sect is not conquered ; all the outbreaks in the Peninsula may be traced to its influence ; and the different governments of Italy have vainly had recourse to every means for its extermination. They were unsparing in bribes to traitors ; they suborned spies ; they sowed dissension in its councils, and became possessed of all its secrets. On this account, not long ago, the society was reformed, and became merged in other secret associations, among which that named *La Giovane Italia*, is principal. The heads of this sect are, for the most part, exiled beyond the Alps ; but, even in banishment, they maintain their influence, and machinate risings : above all, they sedulously keep

awake the spirit of national union. These new societies can never be as powerful as the Carbonari were—they are but a shadow of that mighty influence; but, if they have less power, they have committed no crimes; and work by spreading knowledge and civilisation, instead of striking terror.

It is to be regretted, that the patriots of Italy have recourse to darkness and secrecy to carry on the regeneration of their country: for falsehood is the offspring of mystery, and integrity is destroyed by a system that hides itself from the light of day. The Italians must do away with oaths that cannot bind the traitor; and the dagger, which makes a murderer of him whose intent is virtuous. They must sacrifice the formula of union, and be content with disseminating its spirit. Could they teach inflexible truth, could they inspire military courage, did veneration for just and equal laws spring from their lessons, Italy were nearer the goal it pants to attain.

Meanwhile a certain good has arisen from a sect which, however founded in love for their country, has been polluted by many crimes. Carbonarism cannot be denied the praise of having co-operated to destroy the anti-social municipal prejudices, and the narrow spirit of local attachment, which was long a serious obstacle to the union of a country, divided as Italy is into many states, and subject to the

stranger. The Carbonari first taught the Italians to consider themselves as forming a nation. It is to be hoped they will never forget the lesson. When the Roman considers himself, in his heart, the countryman of the Milanese—when the Tuscan looks upon Naples as also his country—then the power of the Austrian will receive a blow, which it has hitherto warded off, from which it will never recover.

LETTER XV.

Tuscany.

FEBRUARY, 1843.

NOTHING is more difficult than for a foreigner to give a correct account of the state of a country—its laws, manners, and customs;—the first often so different in their operation from what outwardly appears; the latter, never fully understood, Proteus-like, assume a thousand contradictory appearances, and elude investigation. A stranger can only glance at the surface of things—often deceptive—and put down the results of conversations, which, after all, if carefully examined, by no means convey the whole truth, even if they are free from some bias, however imperceptible, either in speaker or hearer, the result of which is a false impression—a false view.

An English person, accustomed to the gigantic fortunes and well-ordered luxury,—to the squalid penury, hard labour and famine,—which mark the opposite orders of society in his own country, is struck by the appearance of ease and equality that

reigns in Tuscany, and especially at Florence. There is poverty of course—but penury cannot be said to exist; there is work—but there is also rest: nay, there is no lack of enjoyment for the poor—while the nobility, for the most part, scarcely rise above the middling orders; bankers and foreigners being those who make most figure in society, and that, except on particular and infrequent occasions, on no magnificent scale.

Many reasons may be assigned for this equality. During the flourishing days of the republic of Florence, a blow was given to the nobility of the city and surrounding country, from which it never recovered. Those nobles who still preserved their titles and fortunes, were obliged to conceal all pride in the former, in order to preserve the influence naturally resulting from the latter. The Medici were merchants; and when an Austrian prince succeeded to the extinct family, no change was operated. On the contrary, it was, I believe, one of them, Leopold I., who abolished the law of primogeniture in Tuscany. It is true, that the usual result of the prohibition against entails in subdividing estates, is frequently eluded. A father possesses absolute power over his property, with the exception of a tenth or twelfth, which is called the *quota legitima*, which must descend to his children, and be divided

among them in equal portions. The same law appertains even to the mother's dowry—which becomes her husband's property. A man may, therefore, accumulate and leave the whole of his possessions to his eldest son, with the exception of the above-named *quota*; and, when this has been done for some generations, large fortunes are preserved. But it seldom is: and as a man has absolute propriety in his estates, a spendthrift can alienate the whole for ever. The nobles of Tuscany being for the most part without pride of order, have readily yielded to the spirit of their country, which absorbs them in the democracy. At the same time, the feeling of accumulation being extinct, no barrier exists to prevent the dissipation of property: in the hands of a young heir, extravagance and play (the bane of Italy), soon bring to an end the fortunes of an ancient name. Thus, I am assured, many of the noblest families in Tuscany are reduced to poverty: the capital of the country has fallen into the hands of bankers, the majority of whom are of Jewish origin. A number of illustrious names, consecrated in the pages of history, have almost disappeared. They only mark the walls of palaces, empty of the impoverished descendants of their former possessors.

This absence of accumulated riches, of course, checks the arts of luxury, mechanical improvements,

and all progress in the framework of society; it multiplies the numbers of those who are just raised above poverty; while the benignant nature of the climate, and the abstemious habits of the Italians, prevent the poor from suffering want. The country is, for the most part, divided into small farms (*podere*), cultivated by the family of the countryman (*contadino*) who holds them—he giving his labour, the crops, and tools—the owner the land, dwellings, and substantial repairs; the profits are divided, and the rent, for the most part, paid in kind—a circumstance which aids the farmer, and limits the fortune of the owner. The country-people labour hard—very hard, and live poorly, but they do not suffer want; and if there are no farmers so rich as with us, there is no absolute agricultural distress.

In Florence itself the common people are well to do. They are, perhaps, the least agreeable people to deal with in Italy; self-opiniated, independent, and lazy, they can often scarcely be brought to work at all; and, when they do, it is in their own way and at their own time. They love their ease, and they enjoy it: they are full of humour and intelligence, though their conceit too often acts as a drawback on the latter. I speak especially of the Florentines, as they are represented to me; for conceit is not a usual fault among the Italians.

As I have said, an English person, accustomed to heart-piercing accounts of suffering, hard labour, and starvation among our poor, gladly hails a sort of golden age in this happy country. We must look on the state of society from a wholly different point of view—we must think of the hunger of the mind; of the nobler aspirations of the soul, held in check and blighted—of the tendency of man to improve, here held down—of the peculiar and surpassing gifts of genius appertaining to this people, who are crushed and trod under foot by the jealousy of government—to understand, with how dead and intolerable a weight King *Log haugs round the necks of those among them, who regret the generous passions and civic virtues of bygone times. The Florentine reads of Filippo Strozzi, of Ferruccio Ferruccini, of Michael Angelo. He remembers the pure and sacred spirit that Savonarola lighted up among the free and religious citizens; he thinks of the slavery that followed, when genius and valour left the land indignant, and

“ For deeds of violence
Done in broad day ; and more than half redeemed
By many a great and generous sacrifice of self to others,”

what has come ? The poet speaks of—

“ the unpledged bowl,
The stab of the stiletto.” *

* Rogers's, “ Italy.”

But those days, too, are gone ; there has come such life as the flocks lead on the mountain sides—such life as the idle, graceful fallow-deer may spend, from spring-tide to rainy autumn, under the noble trees of some abundant park ; but where is the soul of man ? In the hands of those who teach him to fast and tell his beads—to bend the neck to the yoke—to obey the church, not God.

Nor is this all ; especially among the rich ; far—far from it ; for men, unless tamed by labour, can never lead the innocent lives of the beasts of the field : if darker crimes are unfrequent, yet vice flourishes, rank and unchecked : the sense of honour is destroyed ; the nobler affections are crushed ; mental culture is looked on with jealousy, and dies blighted. In the young may be found gleams of inextinguishable genius—a yearning for better things, which terrifies the parents, who see in such the seeds of discontent and ruin : they prefer for their sons the safer course of intrigue, play, idleness—the war of the passions, rather than the aspirations of virtue.

To do nothing has been long the motto of the Tuscan government ; had it been strictly observed, still much might be said against it. Leopold I. was a good sovereign, a clever and liberal man ; Ferdinand, who succeeded to him, suffered many

vicissitudes of fortune during the period of the empire of Napoleon; but he was not, like his namesake of Naples, driven by adversity to cruelty and arbitrary violence. When he was restored to his throne, still it was his wish to keep his people happy and contented. It is his praise, that if authority sheathed its sword and veiled its terrors, nor even used the wholesome restraint of the law to punish crime, it acted simply as a torpedo on the energies of the land, nor used any concealed weapons. Ferdinand constantly and resolutely refused to institute a *secret police* in Tuscany. It was a story I remember, told at the time, during the revolutionary period of 1821, that the Austrian minister at Florence presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the Grand Duke, and begged that they might be arrested. "I do not know whether these men are Carbonari," said Ferdinand; "but I am sure, if I imprison them, I shall make them such," and rejected the list. His successor, Leopold II., has not had the wisdom to pursue the same course. The bane of Italy is the absence of truth, of honour, of straightforwardness; the vices opposite to these nobler virtues have now the additional culture which must ensue from the circulation of a system of *secret police*, of spies, of traitors.

Yet still the government is mild. In 31—32, the

throne of Leopold II. was shaken by several conspiracies; and the revolutionary spirit of Romagna, which tended to unite all Italy in one bond, had numerous proselytes in Tuscany. But for a traitor, it is supposed, that on one occasion the person of the Grand Duke would have fallen into the hands of the conspirators: at the eleventh hour the leader took fright, and discovered all. On this, and on other occasions, the arrests were not numerous; the sentences (to us to whom treason and the gallows are quick following cause and effect,) mild; and these even, after a few months, softened. Leopold wishes his people to be quiet and happy—he hates violence: to pay a traitor to betray, and so to crush a conspiracy noiselessly, appears to him wise and judicious policy. In all respects he is averse to strong measures. For many years no capital punishment has been inflicted in Tuscany; a fact, which of itself demands our admiration, and must be replete with good effects.

“All this is true,” said an Italian to me; “and yet I, who wish my countrymen to cultivate manly habits of thought and action, regard our state as almost worse than any other. Tyranny is, with us, a serpent hid among flowers; and I, for one, sympathise with the sentiment of a Florentine poet—*odio il tiranno che col sonno uccide*. There are other evils

besides those which press upon the *material* part of our nature, and the new generation in Tuscany feels wrongs of another description. The better spirits of our country pine for the intellectual food of which they are deprived. Thus they tend towards a new and better order of things, the more difficult to realise, because a timid and absurd policy endeavours to throw every obstacle in the way to its attainment."

LETTER XVI.

Italian Literature.—Manzoni.—Niccolini.—Colletti.—Amari.

ITALIAN literature claims, at present, a very high rank in Europe. If the writers are less numerous, yet in genius they equal, and in moral taste they surpass, France and England. In these countries everybody reads, and there is a great demand for books of amusement. M. de Custine remarks, that the French write now for "*les concierges et les forçats*," the ignorant and depraved; we write for the frivolous. The uneducated and idle in Italy do not read at all; and an Italian author writes for readers whom he respects, or wishes to instruct: I speak of the lighter literature. In the higher walks we are lamentably deficient, while France boasts of admirable historians. The Italians possess modern histories to compete with France.

There has been a great revolution in Italian poetry of late years; and it has, to a great extent, returned to the nature and character that marked

its outset. When poetry first assumed a form in the Peninsula, Europe was still, if not in a barbarous state, at least in the very infancy of civilisation ; and Italy alone, among European nations, taught arts, science, and letters. The character of the youth of modern European civilisation, with all its defects and all its charms, is indelibly impressed on the literature of that age. The poetry of the first great Italian poets sprang from the complicated feelings which a new æra awoke in them. When you read their best productions, you feel that they are animated by the energy proper to the young ; and even when they appear to guide themselves by ancient rules, the true soul of poetry, the youth of the spirit, breaks its way through every obstacle. The first Italian poets never obeyed, but on the contrary resisted, Aristotelian rules. Dante, the greatest of all—Petrarch and Ariosto, abandoned themselves to the genuine impulse of their minds, and were great ;—great, because free. The history of Italian poetry confirms the truth, that the poet follows the real and the sublimest scope of art when he keeps in mind the character of his country and of his age. The highest Italian poetry is truly national.

The poets who followed were, with few exceptions, imitators ; they bowed to the rules of Aristotle, and

produced no great works. Since the fall of the republic of Florence, poetry and eloquence, which ought to have waited on the changes and advancement of civilisation, and to have harmonised with the thoughts and manners of the country, failed to do so. Italian painting left no path untried so to arrive at perfection, and sought originality by a thousand different roads; while poets were afraid of novelty. This is not strange. The creations of genius and the inventions of the imagination are derived from, and depend on, the moral culture of the intellect, and this culture was shackled. After the sixteenth century Italy never enjoyed political liberty, and the intellect of the country was unable to develope itself with freedom. On this account the Italians ceased to contemplate man and nature in an original manner: they were imitators of the ancients, and in the sequel, imitators of imitators, their literature even became influenced by that of the French. No attempt was made to enlarge its limits or to renovate its spirit; for such an attempt, from political reasons, would have been dangerous. Governments who are not strengthened by public opinion, always shackle the free exercise of the intellectual faculties. Writers both in prose and verse, thus grew to aim at grace of diction and beauty of imagery, unsustained by

daring and original thought, or even by variety of invention, which is more nearly allied to the enjoyment of freedom than is usually supposed. Yet, notwithstanding these obstacles, Italian poetry of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, possesses high merit; and such, so to speak, is its exterior beauty, that, had it greater intrinsic power, it would surpass every other in the world.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the dawn of a reform in every branch of human knowledge may be perceived. Every one felt the need of having recourse to the real source of inspiration, the hopes and fears which form the national spirit of the age; among others Alfieri rose. There can be no doubt that he was the writer who best knew how to echo the passions and hopes of his contemporaries. I pass over the names of the great writers who, on every subject, shed lustre over Italy at that time, and come at once to the authors of the present day, who sprung up at the close of the wars of the French empire, and may be said to be the offspring of a bitter contest that arose at that time among the literary men of Italy: and even among these, I shall confine myself to the two who possess the highest and most durable influence, Manzoni and Niccolini; men who, in common

with other Italian writers of the present day, reject letters as a tribute to frivolity, or means to fortune; consecrating them to the advancement of the great interests of their fellow-creatures, desiring to make them, as Lord Bacon expresses himself, "a rich storehouse for the glory of the creator, and the relief of man's estate."

I have mentioned in another letter how, under Monti's auspices, a great war of words began in Italy: about the same period another battle raged between what was called the classic and romantic schools. It began in 1818, when Berchet, a poet of merit, descended suddenly into the arena, throwing, by way of challenge, a translation of the *Leonora* of Burgher, accompanied by an essay, discarding the old models and planting a new banner, beneath the shadow of which the flower of the Italian youth eagerly crowded to contend—displaying the more enthusiasm, because under this literary discussion was hid the hope of regenerating the political opinions of Italy. The classists were not slow in meeting the attack; and when they found their authority, which had been respected for centuries, was in danger of being overthrown, they hurried to the rescue. Monti fought with them. Angry epithets, ridicule, abuse, were bandied about by both parties in the ardour of fight. Book succeeded to

book ; pamphlets and articles poured furiously down, each breathing the ire of an earlier and more uncivilised age. The Romanticists wished to banish the mythology—to make poetry patriotic—that is, founded on national faith, chronicles, and sympathies. They added example to precept ; Berchet published a volume of odes which met with eminent success ; the subjects were Italian, and breathed great force of passion and feeling. Grossi, the rival, or rather, as he calls himself, the pupil of Manzoni, commenced with “*Ildegonda*,” a tale in verse, founded on a Milanese story, which was received with immense applause. Manzoni published his “*Carmagnola* ;” Pellico his “*Francesca da Rimini*” and “*Eufemio da Messina*.” Pellico, afterwards so sadly celebrated for his misfortunes, was at this time tutor to the sons of Count Porro. He projected founding a periodical work which should serve as a common link between the writers of every state in Italy. Porro and Gonfalonieri seconded him, and hence arose a periodical publication named “*Il Conciliatore*” (the Conciliator). Gioga, Romagnosi, Manzoni, Grossi, Berchet, and Montani contributed to its success, without mentioning the political contributions of Gonfalonieri, Porro, Pecchio, Arrivabene, and many others, who were then secretly conspiring against the govern-

ment, and preparing the ill-starred revolution of 1820-21. The first number of the "Conciliatore" was published Thursday, 3rd September, 1818—it came to an end in 1820. From its birth the Austrian government had decreed its extinction; but its short life was yet glorious, since it excited the public mind to free discussion, and gave an impetus to letters.

Manzoni rose into notice as the poet of this party. His sacred hymns and his tragedy of "Carmagnola" appeared at the time when the literary war raged hottest. His poems were received with enthusiasm. "Carmagnola" and "Adelchi" were hailed as national and romantic dramas; their fame spread into Germany and France. Goëthe speaks of them as making "a serious and profound impression, such as great pictures of human nature must always create." "Let the poet," he says, "continue to disdain the feeble and vulgar portions of human passion, and attempt only such high arguments as excite deep and generous emotions."

To us these tragedies appear, though eminently beautiful as poems, to be failures as dramas. It is not enough that passions and events are developed, we desire character also: they have not succeeded even on the Italian stage, on which several of Alfieri's have kept their place. In the "Carmagnola" the audience are at a loss on whom to expend their

sympathy. A vague and uncertain tone keeps us in suspense—not that suspense arising from the mingled blame and admiration excited by the hero, which is the true foundation of dramatic interest, but caused by a sense that the writer has no determined object. The “*Adelchi*” is, in parts, more interesting; but even in that we find no real hero. Our sympathy is most excited by *Ernengarda*; but she is entirely episodic. These tragedies, however, breathe a spirit that renders them dear to every Italian. They have for their subject national events, which are treated in a powerful and original manner. Alfieri makes his Lombard princesses express themselves like Grecian heroines: Manzoni imbues himself with the spirit of the times; and his personages speak and feel in his dramas, as his creative imagination taught him that they did during life. More particularly this is found in the “*Adelchi*,” where the veil is for the first time lifted from the intrigues of the Popes, who contrived the overthrow of the Longo Bardi, and the successful invasion of Charlemagne, not in the interests of Christianity, but in that of their own temporal power; and the vain struggle of the falling Lombards, with the insolence of the invader and the hypocrisy of the priest, is finely drawn. It is his odes, however, that give high rank to Manzoni as a

poet. In these, his diction is exquisitely finished, and his conceptions rise to the sublime. No reader can fail of being carried away by the pathos and fire of the chorus in *Carnagnola*, describing the horrors of the wars of invasion in Italy, which became civil contests, as the various states adhered to one or other of the foreign powers, who poured down from the Alps for their destruction. The "*Cinque Maggio*" is, out of his own country, the most popular of Manzoni's odes, but this chorus and the sacred hymns obtain the greatest meed of praise in Italy.

The "*Promessi Sposi*," followed. This, to a certain degree, is an imitation of the romances of Walter Scott: it rises above in grandeur of description and in unity and nobility of purpose, though in inexhaustible fecundity of character, the Scotch writer surpasses the Italian. The historian Ripamonti suggested his subjects. The account of the *Innominato* is to be found in his pages, as well as that of the errors of a high-born nun—of a sedition, a famine, a pestilence—of the character and life of *Federigo Borromeo*; but these, though suggested by history, are treated with a poetic fire, an originality of idea, and a vitality, which belongs entirely to Manzoni himself. His tale is sustained by a moral, or rather religious scope. He desires in his romance to prove that society, both civil and political, is diseased, and

that Catholicism must be the remedy. Manzoni is a devout Catholic. He paints, with peculiar fervour, the merits and uses of a pious clergy; and personifying it under the names of Father Cristoforo and Cardinal Borromeo, he shows the beneficial influence it may obtain over the people and the nobility, of whom Renzo and Lucia, the Innominato and Don Rodrigo, are the representatives. It is not the vulgar notion of bringing forward the Pope, with his army of priests and monks, as the regenerators of society, at which he aims; it is the Christian spirit of resignation and self-denial that he wishes to revive, and render the master-feeling of the world. Manzoni is eminently pious and resigned—this is the internal spirit; in form he adheres to ancient Catholicism, which he regards as the final tendency of humanity.

Manzoni was born at Milan in 1784. I have heard that his father was a man totally without instruction; while his mother, the daughter of the Marchese Beccaria, author of the well-known work, "*Dei delitti e delle Pene*," was an accomplished and active-minded woman. Manzoni spent many of his early years on the Lake of Como, at the very spot where he places the scene of his romance. In his youth the Latin poets occupied his attention; he read Virgil and Tibullus with delight—while in Italian

he studied the works of the *cinquecentiste* : so that I have heard that his early unpublished verses are conceived in the spirit of those writers. But he soon broke away from such fetters. He read and admired Dante, with the deep-felt enthusiasm a poet naturally experiences for that sublime writer. At the beginning of the present century Manzoni visited France, and lived for some years with his mother in Paris. In 1808 he returned to Milan, and soon after, chiefly induced by the instigations of his relations, he married a Protestant lady, the daughter of Blondel, a banker of Geneva. They visited Rome, where the lady became a convert to Catholicism ; and, as I am told, converted also her husband, who heretofore had been sceptical or careless on religious subjects—but who, from that hour, became an ardent and devout Catholic. He passes the greater portion of the year at his villa, five miles from Milan ; he sees little society, being by disposition excessively shy. In 1831 he had the misfortune to lose his wife, whom he fondly loved and entirely trusted. I never had the happiness of seeing him : he is, I am told, of middle stature, of gentle aspect, resembling the portraits of Petrarch—and suffers somewhat from nervousness. He is profoundly versed in history, political economy, and agriculture ; and it is said is now occupied on a

history of Italian literature and a philosophical work. In his tastes with regard to poetry not Italian, he admires Schiller and Shakspeare; but, unlike almost every other foreigner, the scepticism of Lord Byron renders his poetry distasteful to him. His soul is filled with love of the beautiful, the elevated, and the pure. These qualities shine forth particularly in his odes, which, since Petrarch, are the most perfect lyrics in the language; and among them, the "Inni Sacri" are distinguished for the exquisite finish and poetic fire that adorns the fervent piety which they breathe.

It would be vain to attempt to say even a few words of the swarm of romance writers that have tried to follow in his steps, and who all deserve the same praise of writing to instruct and elevate, and not, as is too usual with writers of fiction, to amuse, and even corrupt. Out of Italy, Azeglio ranks highest. Like all Italian writers of the day, he is animated by a patriotic feeling. The desire of destroying the prejudices that separate state from state, made him, who is a Piedmontese, choose for his heroes Neapolitans and Florentines. In his first novel, "Ettore Fieramosca," he impresses on his readers the loveliness of the feminine character, depicting the purest struggles between passion and duty. In "Niccoli de' Lapi," a

burning love of country, joined to a piety at war with the grosser superstitions of Rome, adorns his venerable hero. The Tuscans generally do not like his style, and prefer that of Grossi. Tommaso Grossi is the intimate friend of Manzoni, to whom he dedicated his popular romance of "Marco Visconti," calling him by the endearing name of "Master." He commenced his literary career by the publication of two beautiful tales in verse, "Ildegonda," and the "Fuggitiva;" in this species of composition there is no one to compare with him, and "Ildegonda," in the estimation of his countrymen, is quite inimitable. A Florentine, Guerrazzi, has published two romances, "L'Assedio di Firenze," and "La Battaglia di Benevento," popular in his own country, from the ardent, the almost frantic love of liberty which inspires their author. This is a spirit that ever finds a clear echo in hearts palpitating with the sense of wrong, and with the aspiration to independence. He is eloquent and passionate in his style, and has happy touches of situation and character which show him to be a man of genius—but he is diffuse, exaggerated, and sometimes incoherent.

A greater man than these, and in the eyes of his countrymen, equal to Manzoni, is the Florentine, Gian. Battista Niccolini. This poet, it is true, is

not as celebrated as the author of the "Promessi Sposi" on this side of the Alps, but in Italy he has attained an equal, and indeed, in some respects, a higher reputation. Niccolini is a tragic and lyric poet, and a great prose writer. He commenced his career, as a dramatist, by tragedies on Greek and mythological subjects. His mind full of the verses of Dante, Tasso, and Ariosto, he reproduced on the stage, garbed in simple and sublime poetry, the theatre of the Greeks. His "Polixena"—his "Ino e Temisto," and his "Œdipus," might be said to be written on the model set by Alfieri, and equally liberal in sentiment. They were acted, and the beauty of the verses insured their success. Niccolini soon, however, became aware that his works did not meet the wants of modern society, and that he ought no longer to remain in the ways trodden by his masters; but that the time had arrived when to cease imitating the ancients. He resolved to seek the reputation of an original poet, and to create a new theatre. The "Foscarini," a national subject, in which he paints, in the liveliest and blackest colours, the dark tyranny of the Venetian aristocracy, had a success on the stage previously unexampled in Italy. The enthusiasm spread among every rank of society; country people, farmers and labourers from the environs of Florence, were seen

mingled with the lower class of citizens, besieging the avenues of the theatre for hours before the opening of the doors. Animated by this success, Niccolini composed the " Sicilian Vespers," which is, in fact, a protest in favour of Italy.* This drama was received with transports of enthusiasm. The French Secretary of Legation, M. de la Noue, had the folly to complain to the Tuscan government of certain expressions levelled against the French nation. The Austrian Minister laughed at his application, and saw through the artifice. "*Vous ne voyez pas,*" he said, "*que si l'adresse est à vous, le contenu est pour moi.*" An interesting and sad incident occurred on the first representation of this play. The mother of Niccolini, an aged woman, insisted on being present—the immense success and triumph of her son were too much for her—she was carried dying out of the theatre, and only survived two days.

The style of Niccolini's tragedies is looked upon by his countrymen as a perfect model for the romantic drama. It is elevated and yet natural. The poet rises to the height of his argument; his versification is harmonious yet severe—his imagery rich and choice; his tone is majestic, and through

* In the same manner his tragedy, lately published, "*Arnaldo da Brescia,*" is a splendid protest against the temporal dominion of the Pope and the abuse of the power of the church.

all there glows an ineffable love of his art. Niccolini is celebrated also as a lyric poet ; but as far as I have read, he falls very short of Manzoni. As a prose writer he has as yet only published his speeches delivered in the Accademia delle belle Arti. They justify his reputation for research, and may be pointed out as models of style and eloquence; he proves himself in them to be an original thinker, and capable of understanding and judging the age in which he lives.

Niccolini joins to his intellectual greatness a character that makes him the darling of his native city. Devoid of vanity, of pure and exemplary life, he passes his days at Florence, surrounded by friends who respect and love him. He is at present busily occupied by an arduous work, the "History of the House of Swabia."

Italy, from the earliest times, has been renowned for its historians. From Dino Compagni and Villani until Botta, Colletta, and Amari, the Italians appear to inherit the art of narrating events, and describing men and countries, as well as of deducing philosophical conclusions from the experience of past ages.

Colletta's "History of the Kingdom of Naples, from the year 1734 till the year 1825," is a remarkable work, as not being the production of an

author who spent his life among books, but of a man who bore a distinguished part in the political and military affairs of his time, and who was somewhat advanced in years when, exiled from his country, he dedicated himself to the study of his native language and the composition of his history.

The first publications of Colletta consisted of a "Narrative of the Revolution of Naples in 1820," and the "History of the Death of Murat." The vigour of his style, the truth that reigned in his narrative, and the warmth of enthusiasm that animated his pen, attracted attention, and received applause. To a certain degree an adherent of the French rule in Naples, though fully aware of its faults and its injustice, he, in the account of the death of Murat, undertook, with just indignation, to defend the illustrious partizans of the fallen sovereign, whom the minister, Medici, falsely accused of having ensnared and betrayed him; throwing the blame where it was due, on the rashness of the victim and the baseness of his enemies. This narration is incorporated in his history, and forms one of its most striking passages. It seems to me one of the finest pieces of writing in the world—full of a mournful dignity, that renders its pathos touching, and gives grandeur to its scorn.

A few pages are prefixed to his history, written,

I believe, by his friend Count Gino Capponi, which gives an account of his life. While yet a mere boy, he was imprisoned by Ferdinand on a slight suspicion of liberalism, and with difficulty escaped with his life. He, though his name is omitted by French writers, accompanied the soldiers of Murat in their attack upon Capri, and by his gallantry and sagacity mainly contributed to its success. Many important posts, both civil and military, were entrusted to him by Murat, and, on his return, by Ferdinand, and he acquitted himself in all with reputation. He acted at once a prudent, firm, and patriotic part, during the Neapolitan revolution. But though Ferdinand employed, frequently consulted, and often followed his advice, this did not save him after the Austrian invasion. He was first imprisoned at Brünn, in Moravia, at the foot of the Castle of Spielberg, of infamous renown; afterwards, as his health failed, he was allowed to transfer himself to Tuscany. During his severer imprisonment and milder exile, ever ambitious of a noble fame, he meditated his future work. First, he applied himself to the study of his native tongue, forming his style on that of Tacitus; and then, armed with the strength of pictorial and vigorous language, he dedicated himself to the compilation of his history.

An eye witness of many of the events which he narrates, and frequently a prominent actor in them, he strives to be impartial both to friends and enemies. He has not, however, escaped the blame of undue bias. He expresses his opinions at times with too much passion, displaying excessive severity against his rivals or opponents in his military career. This, however, is not much; and, with very slight drawbacks, he may be esteemed worthy of the reader's confidence. He knew the men whose character he draws, and these individual portraits give value to the work they contribute to adorn. Among them may be named, in especial, that of the infamous Canosa, and the youthful hero, Emanuel de Deo. Even more admirable are his striking descriptions, after the manner of Tacitus. If you shrink from undertaking the whole work, read the accounts of the earthquake in Calabria in 1783—of the executions of 1799—of the death of the unfortunate Murat—of the tragical fate of the Vardarelli—and the character of the reign of Ferdinand, at the conclusion. It will be difficult to find finer passages in any history.

He came to Florence in 1823, and died on 11th November, 1831. The interval was spent in composing his work, and rendered happy by his intimate friendship with two Italians, esteemed as

the cleverest men of their time, Count Gino Capponi and Valcriani, translator of Tacitus. These friends assisted him with their counsels and criticisms—some Italians go so far as to consider Gino Capponi the writer of the history. But others, who associated with Colletta and his friends at Florence, have assured me that this supposition is entirely erroneous.

Quite lately, another historical work has appeared, the production of a young Sicilian, Michele Amari, who promises, from his talents, his industry, and the admirable spirit of his book, to add another illustrious name to Italy.

The Sicilian Vespers was a tremendous event, which astonished and confounded the nations, and even in Italy was ill understood by contemporary historians. It was supposed to be the result of a conspiracy formed by Giovanni da Procida, under the auspices of Don Pedro, King of Arragon, who reaped the fruits. Amari, on consulting the archives of Sicily, found reason at first to suspect the truth of, and afterwards entirely to reject, this explanation of an event, which, in this light, could only be regarded as a cruel massacre—but which, from the documents he adduces, he proves to have resulted, not from a treacherous conspiracy, but from the sudden impulse of a people maltreated

and insulted to desperation; whose only defence was the knife, whose only safety rested in utterly rooting out their oppressors.

Fired with generous sympathy for a people who, against a fearful odds, resolved to liberate themselves from a barbarous foreign oppression, Amari relates the events of the war that followed the massacre with glowing eloquence. The history of the siege of Messina may take place beside the noble resistance of Numantia and Saragossa, with the more cheering result that it was successful. This portion of his work, and the subsequent chapters that describe the last war and death of Don Pedro of Arragon, are admirably written. You will scarcely find in any historian a more animated and graphic narration than that which tells how Don Pedro, deserted by all, hated by all, proudly and sternly, and at last successfully, stood his ground against his numerous and triumphant foes.

It is the work of a young man, and of a Sicilian, who had to learn and form the language in which he writes. The style wants elegance; the construction of the history is imperfect, and, at times, rambling; but it has the first and best merit of a work of genius—it is written from the heart. The enthusiasm of the author carries the reader along with him; you forget the imperfections in

the justness of his reflections, and the sincerity of his convictions; you excuse the absence of methodical order as you are carried away by the interest which he throws over the facts he narrates.*

* This work was first published at Palermo about two years ago, under the title of "Un Periodo delle Istorie Siciliane del secolo 13^{mo}." The manuscript was of course submitted to the censor of the press, who permitted its publication. It acquired universal reputation, and was enthusiastically received in the kingdom of Naples. As soon as public attention was excited, the police of that state grew suspicious and fearful. The book was prohibited, the remaining copies were sequestered, and all notice of it in newspapers and periodical works, which had already begun to praise the author and give an account of his book, was forbidden. The persecution did not cease here; influenced by some sinister, and, as is supposed, personal motive, Del Carretto, director or minister of the police, gave orders that Amari should be dismissed from an employment he held in a government office, and sent to Naples. Signor Amari was warned in time, and convinced that a long and severe imprisonment awaited him at the capital, he preferred going into voluntary exile from his country, to falling into the hands of a cruel enemy. Signor Amari is at present living in Paris, where he published, about a year ago, a second edition of his work, under the amended title of "Guerra del Vespro Siciliano," with corrections and additions. He is at present occupied in collecting materials for the compilation of a history of Sicily, from the occupation of the Saracens; for which, as he must consult Arabic documents, he is studying with unwearied ardour; he thus adds another proof that the Italians of the present day are capable of severe application and learned research, in addition to the frequent gift of remarkable talents.—1844.

LETTER XVII.

Voyage to Rome.

MARCH 20.

I LEFT England, as you know, with very vague ideas of whither I should go. I did not dare entertain a hope that I should visit Rome. But,

“Thought by thought, and step by step led on,”

We have reached what Dr. Johnson says is the aim of every man's desire.

My companions dreaded a long *veturino* journey, whose leisure is a false lure, since you always arrive too late, and set out too early, to see anything in the towns where you stop. I consented to go by sea, and Heaven rewarded the act of self-sacrifice.

We left Florence at twelve at night, in one of the most uncomfortable *veturino* carriages I ever had the ill fortune to enter. The moon was near its full, and its bright snow-like glare almost blinded my friends, who rode outside, and prevented them from sleeping. The morning dawned golden and still; and, although it was March, we anti-

cipated a calm voyage. So it proved. We embarked on board the "Castor," a small, but well-built and quick steamer, and dropped down towards Elba. The view from the sea near Leghorn is not sufficiently praised. The Ligurian Alps

" Towards the North appeared,
Thro' mist, a heaven : sustaining bulwark, reared
Between the east and west."

The sun went down beneath the sea, and the full moon rose at the same moment from behind the promontory of Piombino—hazy at first,—but as she rose higher, assuming her place as radiant Queen of Night. We passed between the island of Elba, whose dark and distinct outline rose out of the calm water, and the shadowy form of distant Corsica ; as we proceeded, other and other islands appeared studding the tranquil deep, and varying its sublime monotony. It was very difficult to consent to shut one's eyes on so very fair a scene.

At sunrise we were on deck again, and the steamer, with that sort of pride which a boat always seems to exhibit when it reaches its bourne, entered the harbour of Civita Vecchia. We were detained for *pratique* till eight o'clock, when the Governor got up, and for three hours we had full leisure to contemplate the growth of the morning on the sea, and to feel tired of conjectures about the towers and

buildings on shore. As soon as we landed, and had breakfasted, and were refreshed, we set off in a separate diligence for the Eternal City.

The road for some miles bordered the sea. The shore is varied by little bays, inlets, and promontories—every five miles is a watch-tower,—the Marmemma is spread around, deadly in its influence on man, but in appearance, a wild, verdant, varied pasture land, with here and there a grove of trees, and broken into hill and dale: the waves sparkled on our right; the land stretched out pleasant to the eye on the left; mountains showed themselves on the horizon. No one can look on this country as merely so much earth—every clod is a sacred relic—every stone is an object of curiosity—every name we hear satisfies some desire or awakens some cherished association. And thus, in a sort of trance of delight, we were whirled along, till the old walls appeared. We entered by the Janiculum, and skirted the Place of St. Peter's; then the pleasant spell was snapped, as we had to turn our thoughts to custom-houses, hotels, and all the worry of arrival.

Evening advanced; but what ailed the Romans? they were all looking up at the sky—it was an epidemic—in crowds or singly, not an eye looked straightforward; all were looking at the heavens;—at a turn in the street we looked too, and saw in the

south a long trail of glowing light; we were the more surprised, as we had perceived nothing of the sort the previous night at sea. It was a comet, of course;—does it shine in your more northern hemisphere? here, it loses itself among the stars of Orion, while the nucleus is below the visible horizon;—it is bright, yet the stars shine through its web-like texture, which, composed of thin beams, is stretched out, and you may see delicate sea-weeds—or aquatic plants in a stream, through a large space of the heavens.

LETTER XVIII.

Raffaëlle at Rome.

APRIL 5.

THE multitude of pictures and statues at Rome is such, that it is quite impossible to give the most cursory account of the Galleries. I have been more struck even than I expected, by what I have seen ; the limits of man's power appear enlarged to the uttermost verge of all that the imagination can conceive of beautiful and great.

The admirable proportion of the temple-like chambers in which the finest relics of ancient statuary are placed—the snatches of views that you catch, from open windows, of the papal gardens and the country around the city, renders a visit to the Vatican a step out of every-day life into a world adorned by the works of the highest genius of all countries and all times. It is a great pity that they are not arranged in a manner to instruct the spectator as to the age and schools to which they belong—the collection at the Vatican greatly needs

to be regulated by enlightened criticism—but here, everything is done from paltry motives: a man, who in some way can command patronage, writes a catalogue of all the statues, and changes their numbers and places, to make it necessary that you should buy his book; so that those who go with the elaborate and learned works of German critics in their hands, find every reference a mistake, and get hopelessly embroiled.

It is said that all the works of ancient Grecian sculpture bear the character of divine repose; and that those statues which are in attitudes of action, are the works of Greeks, indeed, but executed when Greece was a province, at the command of Roman masters. Among such, is the Apollo Belvidere, which is not adorned by the faultless perfection of Athenian art—yet who can criticise? As I entered the compartment in which he stands, a divine presence seemed to fill the chamber. The godlike archer is stepping forward; his gesture and look breathe the eagerness and gladness of victory. In some sort, this statue is the ideal of a youthful hero—but he is not human—there is no trace of the chivalrous feeling, that even in triumph honours the fallen. He is above fear and above pity.

From room to room the eye is so fed by sights of beauty, “that the sense aches at them;” truly the

limbs unwillingly fail. From the halls of the statues you go through long galleries filled with funereal urns, ancient maps, and old tapestry worked from Raffaele's cartoons, into rooms where the paintings are. It is managed so, that when you have passed through all, you quit the rooms by the loggie of Raffaele, and the Swiss on guard does not permit you to return ;—there is no great harm in this—as it would be nearly impossible to walk the whole way back again. Visitors ought, nevertheless, to be allowed to enter by this door at choice, that they may at once reach the pictures without the extra labour of traversing the extensive galleries that lead to them. Of the oil paintings we see here, the *San Geronimo* by *Domenichino* is perhaps the finest. Of the *Transfiguration* I have before spoken : as a composition, it is esteemed the grandest picture in the world ; but I turn from it to others (to the *Madonna di Foligno*, for instance) of an earlier date, in which there is a more heavenly grace ; an expression of celestial and pure beauty, an emanation of the immortal soul, superior to any perfection of colouring or grouping.

But it is among the frescos of Raffaele that I have lingered longest with the greatest delight. These were the first works of this matchless painter, when called to Rome. He had been soliciting leave

to be associated with Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo in painting the halls of the Palazzo Vecchio, at Florence, when Pope Julius II. called him to Rome, and gave him in charge to adorn the walls of the Vatican.

At this time Michael Angelo was, I will not say, his rival; but, as he painted the Sistine Chapel while Raffaele was engaged upon the Vatican, a passion of generous emulation rose in the heart of the latter that spurred him on to work with indefatigable ardour. As Lanzi tells us, the subjects chosen for these halls elevated his imagination. They were not scenes from old mythology, "but the mysteries of the noblest science—the most august circumstances pertaining to religion, and military deeds whose result established peace and faith in the world." None better than Raffaele could achieve this work; for of all men he had firmest hold of "that golden chain which is let down from Heaven, and with a divine enthusiasm ravishes our souls, made to the image of God, and stirs us up to comprehend the innate and incorruptible beauty to which we were once created."*

He began by the figures of Theology, Philosophy, Poetry, and Jurisprudence, on the arched roof of one of the rooms. The figures of Theology and

* Plato's Ion. Shelley's Essays.

Poetry, particularly the latter, are in the highest style of mystic art. The picture named the Dispute of the Sacrament—if that be the name of a picture which is, after all, nameless—covers one of the walls. There is an assemblage of all the doctors of the church, and among them Raffaele boldly placed Dante, with his laurel crown, and, still more boldly, Savonarola, who ten years before had been publicly burned at Florence as a heretic.* Above these groups, heaven opens, and the Trinity and the Angels are congregated. By the lovers of the mystic school, this picture is preferred to every other; yet I was more struck by that which represents the Vision driving Heliodorus from the Temple. The story, as told in the Apocrypha,† is fitted to excite the imagination. Through the relation of Simon, Seleucus sent Heliodorus, his treasurer, to seize on the wealth of the Temple, laid up by Onias, the High Priest, for the relief of widows and fatherless children. When Heliodorus entered the Temple to execute the king's command, "there was no small agony throughout the whole city. Then, whoso looked the high priest in the face, it would have wounded his heart; for his countenance, and the changing of his colour, declared the inward agony of his mind." The

* M. Rio.

† Maccabees, ii. 3.

whole city flocked, transported by indignation and grief. "And all, holding up their hands to heaven, made supplication." Heliodorus, nevertheless, persisted; but when he presented himself at the treasury, "the Lord of Spirits, and the Prince of all power, caused a great apparition, ^{so} that all that presumed to come in with him were astonished at the power of God, and fainted, and were sore afraid."

It is deemed the triumph of art to adorn the real with something grander than meets the ordinary gaze; but to paint the superhuman, and convey to the eyes the image of that which surpasses the might of visible objects, and can scarcely be conceived by the strongest effort of the imagination, is that which Raffaele only could achieve. In this fresco the vision of a "horse with a terrible rider" fills the beholder with awe—the one shakes terror from his looks, while the horse may be seen to neigh and breathe destruction around. The figures of the two youths, "notable in strength, and excellent in beauty," who are driving the spoiler with scourges from the Temple, are divine in swiftness and might. Celestial indignation animates their gestures, and motion was never painted so real, so impetuous, so uncontrollable.

This was among the latter works of Raffaele. Whether it be, as M. Rio argues, that falling from that high devotional state of mind which inspired his younger works, he could no longer rise to ideal perfection, or that the remains of antique art at Rome, and the simple and majestic pencil of Michael Angelo, in the Sistine Chapel, giving larger scope to his ideas of composition, he began a new style, and the powers of man being limited, the attaining something new, however excellent, occasioned him to lose a portion of that which he before possessed; there can be no doubt that his manner entirely changed. I am not always disposed to regret this alteration. It has been the cause of a variety in excellence; for if we miss in his latter pictures the portraiture of innocence, and divine love, represented in the Madonnas and saints of his first style, we have something else, which no one but Raffaele could give. To understand me, let me ask you to call to mind the Madonna di Foligno in the Vatican, and the Descent from the Cross in the Palazzo Borghese. The first beams, with an adorable and beatified sweetness, all purity and love. In the second, do you remember, besides the many other pity-striking figures, the St. John? He is holding one end of the cloth which enfolds his dead master's body. The expression of agony proper to the

beloved disciple, struggles with the exertion of strength necessitated by the act on which he is employed; the resolution to perform the rites due to the dead, is mingled with yearning veneration for the corpse of him whom he passionately adored. These pictures are the triumph of Christian art. Then recollect the frescos of the history of Psyche in the Farnesina, and the youthful and nymph-like loveliness of the Galatea—these are specimens of his last style—and form your own opinion as to his improvement or otherwise. Whichever way you incline, there is one conclusion to which you must necessarily come, that Raffaele in both styles, the Christian and the Pagan, is superior to every other painter—“high actions and high passions best describing.”

Day after day, often accompanied by our accomplished friend, whose taste and knowledge are invaluable, we visit the galleries of Rome. In one small chamber of the Barberini palace are three gems of art; and in these, expression appeared triumphant over skill, to the disadvantage of Raffaele. A portrait of the Fornarina is contrasted with that of Beatrice Cenci, by Guido. In vain I was told to compare the exquisite finish, the faultless painting of cheek and lip, of the disagreeable-looking beauty, with the comparatively imperfect touches of Guido's

pencil. The innocent, tearful face of the young and lovely girl, whose look expresses the self-pity which must have swelled in her heart, as she thought, how she, from very horror of crime, was become a murderer, put to shame the dark eyes and pencilled brows of her, whose passion was devoid of tenderness. It is gratifying to see the work of an English painter in a Roman church. The picture by Mr. Severn in the Cathedral of San Paolo fuore delle Mura, is a beautiful composition, and shews to great advantage. It is the first work of a Protestant artist admitted into a Roman church. The high esteem in which Mr. Severn was held in Rome ensured him this distinction.

I have visited with great pleasure the studios of modern statuaries. They are mostly now employed in portraying or idealizing a Capuan peasant-woman, *la Grazia*, whose beauty is of an expressive, mobile, and grand cast. The best representation of her is as Hagar in the desert.

The angel of the day of judgment, by Tenerani, is very fine; and Mr. Gibson's studio contains statues admirably executed in that classic taste which he so successfully cultivates.

LETTER XIX.

Ruins of Rome.—The Holy Week.—Music and Illuminations.

TRINITA DE' MONTI, APRIL.

“WHAT are the pleasures that I enjoy at Rome?” you ask. They are so many, that my mind is brimful of a sort of glowing satisfaction, mingled with tearful associations. Besides all that Rome itself affords of delightful to the eye and imagination, I revisit it as the bourne of a pious pilgrimage. The treasures of my youth lie buried here.

The sky is bright—the air impregnated with the soft odours of spring—we take our books and wile away the morning among the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, or the Coliseum. From the shattered walls of the former, the view over the city and the Campagna is very beautiful. The Palatine is near at hand, and majestic ruins guide the eye to where the golden palace spreads its vast extent. These ruins, chiefly piles of brick—remnants of massive walls or lofty archways—may not be beautiful in themselves; but overgrown with parasites and

flowering shrubs, they are grouped in so picturesque a manner among broken ground and dark gigantic trees—the many towers of the city gathering near—the distant hills on the clear horizon, with clouds just resting in scattered clusters on the tops, and the sky above, deeply blue—that the whole scene is delightful to *feel*, as well as look at.

There is one view from the Coliseum that I am never tired of contemplating. Ascending to the second range of arches, and looking from the verge towards the tomb of Cestius—in the foreground is the Temple of Venus, the Palatine Mount, and the ruins of the Forum—the country, varied by woods and hills and ruins, is spread beyond—the tomb of Cestius, gleaming at a distance, is a resting-place for the eye—and various trees seem placed expressly to give the scene the air of a landscape sitting for its picture—all grace and smiles and radiance.

The Forum used to be, long, long ago, before I ever saw it, a broken space of ground, with an avenue through the Campo Vacino leading to the Coliseum, with triumphal arches and tall columns half-buried in the soil. Now the excavations are considerable. I have heard painters lament that the picturesque beauty has been spoilt; but as its appearance, such as time and neglect had left it, is changed,

it is as well to complete the task of excavation. Much has been done since I was here last, and workmen are in constant employ. I wish you could see the chief among them. Imagine an Indian file of fifty old men in the last stage of decrepitude, grey-headed, bent-shouldered, and feeble-legged, each rolling a small wheelbarrow, creeping along so slow, and yet that extreme slowness appearing an exertion for them.

From the Forum we ascended the hill of the Capitol, and, with some trouble, got the custode, and mounted the tower of the Campidoglio. We looked round, and fancied how, from this height, the patricians and consuls of Old Rome watched the advance of marauding parties that wound out from the ravines of the hills, or whose spears and helmets glittered above the brow of the Janicular hill; and the cry of the Sabines, or fiercer and more terrible, of the Gauls, made the populace gather in the Forum below, and give their names to be inscribed as soldiers for instant fight. The Tiber glitters in the distance, and Soracte rising from out the plain,

“Heaves like a long-swept wave, about to break,
And on the curl hangs pausing.”*

I never look at the ridge of Sant’ Oreste, (as it

is now called,) but these lines, which so admirably paint it, come into my mind.

I scarcely know what view of Rome to prefer. That from the ruined Baths of Caracalla, or from the verge of the Coliseum, or the panorama of the Capitol, or from the porch of the Lateran, which commands a different landscape.—You see nothing of the city, for your back is turned on it; you are on a height, the Campagna at your feet, spanned by a number of ruined aqueducts, whose grandeur and extent impress the mind, more than any other object, with a sense of Roman greatness. From the Lateran down to the Coliseum, nearly a mile, and in the adjoining space, was the most magnificent quarter of the old city. Now it is occupied by *Poderi*, divided by high walls, with here and there a ruin—a toppling wall or broken arch. When Pope Gregory VII. called in Robert Guiscard to drive Henry III. from his capital, the Saracens of Sicily, under the command of the Norman, sacked Rome, and this portion of the city was burned and levelled with the soil. So utter was the desolation, that the survivors found it more convenient to build nearly a new town at a distance, than to attempt to restore their homes among the smoking ruins of palaces, temples, and baths, which lay a black heap, till they crumbled away—and trees and flowers

sprung up, and the peasantry came with the plough, and sowed seed and reaped corn.

We spent half a day rambling over the Palatine--the Contadino, our guide, told us that every July and August, the mal' aria reigned, and his sunken cheeks spoke of his having been a victim. He asked us if we had the mal' aria in England. -- "Che bel paese," he said with a sigh on hearing our negative.

Often, as at Venice, we leave our home without any definite object, and wander about the deserted part of Rome--that which once was the centre of its magnificence. Thus we viewed the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, built by Michael Angelo, with materials, columns and marbles, remnants of the Baths of Diocletian; it is one of the most striking and majestic of the Roman churches. Thus we found ourselves at the foot of the Capitol, and an inscription led us to visit the Mamertine prisons, a spot held sacred since St. Peter and other Christian martyrs were confined there. It is indubitably the oldest relic of the ancient republic, and the monument of its cruel and arrogant disdain for human life and suffering, impresses one painfully. How much of that has there ever been all over the world--and now! I used to pride myself on English humanity; but the boast is quenched in

shame, since I read, last winter, the accounts of the cruelties practised in the Affghan war. We were injured, and, therefore, we revenge; such also was the tenet of old Rome.

The galleries of the Capitol often entice us. Here are some of the finest statues in the world. The Amazon, in whom a severe and martial expression is allied to feminine grace, and a something womanly softens the countenance in spite of sternness. The Venus of the Capitol is the only Queen of Beauty that can at all compete with the Goddess of the Tribune. The Cupid and Psyche is less tender and innocent than the Florentine group, but there is a passionate love in the caress that makes the marble appear tremulous with emotion.

APRIL 20.

Holy Week is over. The ceremonies of the Church strike me as less majestic than when I was last here; perhaps this is to be attributed to the chief part being filled by another actor. Pius VII. was a venerable and dignified old man. Pope Gregory, shutting his eyes as he is carried round St. Peter's, because the motion of the chair makes him sea-sick, by no means excites respect. If I ever revisit Rome during the Holy Week, I shall not seek for tickets for the ceremonies; it will

be quite enough to enter the Cathedral for half-an-hour while they were going on.

But a thousand times over I would go to listen to the Miserere in the Sistine Chapel; that spot made sacred by the most sublime works of Michael Angelo. I do not allude to the Last Judgment—which I do not admire—but to the paintings on the roof, which have that simple grandeur that Michael Angelo alone could confer on a single figure, making it complete in itself—enthroned in majesty—reigning over the souls of men.

The music, not only of the Miserere, but of the Lamentations, is solemn, pathetic, religious—the soul is rapt—carried away into another state of being. Strange that grief, and laments, and the humble petition of repentance, should fill us with delight—a delight that awakens these very emotions in the heart—and calls tears into the eyes, and yet which is dearer than any pleasure. It is one of the mysteries of our nature, that the feelings which most torture and subdue, yet, if idealized—elevated by the imagination—married harmoniously to sound or colour—turn those pains to happiness; inspiring adoration; and a tremulous but ardent aspiration for immortality. Such seems the sentient link between our heavenly and terrestrial nature; and thus, in Paradise, as Dante tells,

—glory beatifies the sight, and seraphic harmony wraps the saints in bliss.

Another sight of this week, is the washing of the feet of the pilgrims. The ladies of Rome belong to a sisterhood who perform this service on Good Friday for the female pilgrims. The hospital of the *Pelegrini* was crowded; we could hardly make our way. In my life I never saw so much female beauty as among the sisterhood—their faces so perfect in contour; so lovely in expression; so noble, and so soft, that the recollection will haunt my memory for ever.

I went to mass at the Church of the Jesuits—as usual glittering with ornaments, precious stones, wax-lights, and all manner of finery. The music was in the same style—well suited for the Opera-house; it would there have enchanted; but it wanted that solemn, religious descant, which awed the spirit in the Sistine Chapel.

The illumination of St. Peter's terminated the sights of the week—that and the fire-works of the Castel Sant' Angelo.—There is more of creation in the first of these sights than in any other in the world. It is but a dim, and scant, and human imitation of the third verse of the first chapter of Genesis; but it is an imitation of the most sublime act of divine power; and though bearing but a

very weak resemblance to what we imagine of the moment when, on a word, light disclosed the glories of creation, yet, there is darkness, and radiance sudden and dazzling bursts forth, and—it is very fine.

It is curious to see all these solemnities—many of them doubtless of Pagan origin—dear to the people, and therefore preserved and christianised by the Popes—and to reflect, that such, for many, many centuries, was the chief link fostered by religion between man and the Divinity. We have obliterated all this among ourselves. No doubt the impulse of piety in the heart is a truer and purer oblation; but Catholics reason that these are aids and supports to enable weak humanity—a creature half matter, half soul—to sustain itself in its pious ecstasies. Besides, God created in us not only the sense of, but also in some degree the power of creating the beautiful; and is it not well to dedicate to divine worship the glorious gifts which were bestowed for the purpose of raising the soul from earth and linking it to Heaven?

LETTER XX.

The Pontifical States.

MAY 3.

“WHEREVER the Catholic religion is established, I have uniformly observed indolence, with its concomitants, dirt and beggary, to prevail; and the more Catholic is the place, the more they abound.”* These are the words of a clever writer, well acquainted with Rome, *à propos* of Rome. It must be added, that wherever the Catholic religion prevails, great works of charity subsist. During the time of Catholicism, charitable institutions, as is well known, abounded all over England—in some few obscure corners such still survive, where the old may find a peaceful refuge—not in crowded receptacles, where they are looked on as useless burthens on a heavily-taxed parish—but in decent almshouses, bordering grassy enclosures, near gardens that supply their table; peaceful nooks, where the aged may converse with nature, and find the way to the grave soothed

* Rome in the Nineteenth Century.

by that calm so dear to declining years.* Jesus Christ so forcibly recommended the poor to all who professed his religion, that, in common with all other Christians, every good Catholic considers works of charity to be his paramount duty. One of the most enlightened, Pascal, gave a touching proof of this, when, on his death-bed, he only admitted his pains to be soothed by careful nursing, on condition that two paupers in the same state should receive the same attentions in an adjoining apartment. The poor were to him objects of real and tender affection.

As eleemosynary charity is an essential portion of Catholicism, we may expect that it should flourish in the capital of the Catholic world. There are many beggars, but there is no absolute want, at Rome. Beggary is a condition, and it becomes a matter of favour to be allowed to beg. Plates of metal are given to such as are permitted, and fastened to the arm of poor deformed objects, who are to be found in every corner of the city, asking alms. Many convents distribute food regularly at different hours, when all who ask may have. There is, besides, a house of industry, I hear, carried on on excellent principles. There are, to

* The want of conventual charities, whose funds, on the Reformation, were greedily appropriated by the laity, forced Queen Elizabeth to institute the Poor-Laws.

the destruction of the savings of the poor, state lotteries all over Italy. It was considered that this demoralising gambling ought not to be kept up in the capital of the head of the church: but it was argued that a love of putting in the lottery could not be rooted out, and while Naples, Tuscany, and Venice had lotteries, the Romans would send their money to those states, if they could not be indulged at home. * A Roman lottery therefore exists, and the proceeds go to keep up a house of industry. Here a number of young people are taught various trades. Young men are apprenticed, and girls receive dowries, while the old people have a home that smoothes their passage to the grave. Besides these conventual aids and government institutions, there are many confraternities of citizens whose bond of duty is charity to the sick and poor. People of all classes of society belong to them, and meet on an equal footing. The city is divided into several quarters, and the various confraternities have each one assigned to them, which they visit and relieve.

Several of the persons I know remained in Rome during the visitation of the cholera in 1837, and they still vividly remember the horror of the time.

It was a conviction, a superstition, nourished by the church, that this fatal epidemic would spare

the Holy City, and the arguments urged to prove its exemption were absurd, and yet horrible to hear. When the great heats of August set in, and a few cases began to be mentioned, the government, grown frantic through mingled terror and folly, thought only of convincing the people that Rome would be spared. The pest might be said to have been welcomed by illuminations and processions, and its virulence propagated and fixed by the poor people being encouraged to go about barefoot, while their last coin was drained from them to buy oil for lamps to burn in the churches. The stench and heat in these edifices became of itself pestilential, for the summer was more sultry even than usual, and the crowds that filled them were tremendous. Groups of persons were to be seen in the streets and churches, standing barefoot before the Madonnas and crucifixes, expecting to see the images open their eyes and shed blood, both of which miracles, it was averred, had taken place. But this absurd buffoonery sunk into insignificance compared with the dreadful ideas purposely put into the people's minds about poison; in the early stage of the epidemic, several persons fell victims to the frenzy thus occasioned.

In the middle of August the most splendid illuminations had place all over Rome,—a thanksgiving

to God for sparing the city. On the 15th, the Pope set out in procession to accompany a famous black Madonna from the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore to St. Peter's. Thrice he was stopped by storms. People crowded in to join from all the towns and villages in a circuit of many miles. The vast concourse, the excitement of the procession, and the violent rains to which they were exposed, barefoot and bareheaded, tended only to exasperate the power of the epidemic. On that day many persons died: the illusion vanished—it was admitted that the cholera was in Rome. Strangers and nobles fled, and for two months the most fearful scenes had place. The dead-cart went all night—people fell down in the streets, convulsed by the frightful spasms of that terrible disease; 15,000 persons (about one in ten of the whole population, 150,000) died at Rome.

The Pope shut himself up in the Quirinal. Every one who entered the palace was obliged to undergo fumigation—a thing abhorrent to the Romans, who detest every kind of perfume. An imperative order was issued that the cardinals, the heads of government, and various *employés*, should not quit the city—but it was very ill obeyed—government was indeed paralysed, and great fears were entertained, especially at first, of the violence

of the ignorant and wretchedly misguided people. "If you were to imagine the *devil insane*," wrote an English gentleman, "it might give you some notion of the state of things, and they already talk of sending for some Austrian troops." As the epidemic pursued its course, the people grew at first familiar with it, and then cowed. Their state was most horrible. I have heard, from one who was on the spot, that it was greatly to be doubted whether all who were borne nightly in the dead-carts to hideous, unhonoured sepulture, really died of cholera. There was reason to believe that many were victims of a virulent typhus, brought on by acts of superstition and excessive fear—and, worse still, that numbers died of starvation. The administrators of government having for the most part fled or shut themselves up—a strict cordon being drawn round the city, and the neighbourhood struck with inconceivable panic—food grew scarce, and the poor wretches who had spent their last in propitiating Heaven by lamps and candles, without money and without succour, died of want.

Yet there was not absent many redeeming touches in the dark picture of the times. The regular clergy fulfilled their duties unshrinkingly; and the conduct of the Jesuits was particularly

admirable. They visited every corner of the city, watching by death-beds with unwearied zeal. They were seen taking, with gentle care, babes from the sides of their mothers, who lay dead in the streets, wrapping them tenderly in their black gowns, and carrying them to places appointed for their refuge. The confraternities also did not desert their post. A Roman told me he was one of three brothers; they removed their aged father to a safe place, at a distance from contagion, and remained themselves: they were employed at different quarters of the city. "I never felt happier," said my informant; "our father was in safety; we had no fears for ourselves. All day we were busied among the sick, and when we met in the evening, it was with light hearts; the employment gave us something to do and to think about; the dangers we might be supposed to run, endeared us to each other. I remember now with regret the sort of exhilaration with which we met, thanked God for our preservation, and then again went to our task, not only without fear, but with a feeling of gladness superior to every other happiness." The few English, also, who remained, displayed unshrinking courage. Lord C——, in particular, a Catholic nobleman, acted with a heroism that shamed the Cardinals and heads of the state. He earnestly

strove to prove how erroneous was the fear of contagion; the succour he brought, and the example he displayed, were of the utmost utility, and saved many, many lives.

The country round Rome, each town and village within its cordon; was left pretty much to itself. No disturbances occurred, and the people showed themselves much more capable than could have been supposed, of self-government. One English family took refuge at Olévano, a small town, some fifteen miles from Rome. They went thither without the intention of remaining; they took very little money with them, and could get nothing from Rome: the people of this little place showed them a kindness at once singular and touching. They not only provided them with provisions, but exerted themselves to please and amuse them. Each day some little fête was given by the mere country people for their diversion; so that they seemed, like the personages of the Decameron, to have escaped from a city of the pest, to enjoy the innocent pleasures of life with the greater zest.

Such is the amiable and courteous disposition of this people, except when their violent passions urge them to crimes, which they scarcely look on as wicked; for they are taught (for heresy, read any sin against the ordinances of the church)

*“ Il gran peccato è l'eresia ! che gli altri
Pesano men d'una piuma, e se ne vanno
Con un segno di croce.” **

Where men's wants are few and easily supplied, where a benignant climate clothes the earth in abundance, and nature is the indulgent mother instead of the stern overseer of our species, men have leisure, and, if they are idle, they become vicious. The air of Rome inspires lassitude, and renders the inhabitants inert. The Romans who live in the healthy parts of the city are all inclined to grow fat ; their language, unidiomatic, and, so to speak, long-winded in its expressions, is pronounced with a grace of accent, a slow and melodious emphasis, that renders it more agreeable than any other Italian to the ears of strangers, and is strangely in harmony with the dreamy contentment of their minds. Accustomed to receive and to gain by foreigners, they are courteous, amiable, and ready to serve ; there is among them an air of easy indolence, which, though it militates against our notions of manly energy, yet is never brutalized into stupidity. The women are among the most beautiful of the Italians. You feel as if all lived under a spell ; and so they do ; for, troubled and unquiet as is the rest of the papal dominions, Rome and its

* Arnaldo da Brescia.

immediate neighbourhood remains in a sort of hazy apathy. The Pope appreciates highly their passive submission, and does all he can to keep them from communicating with the discontented districts. For this reason he is opposed to the construction of railroads; that, as he says, his revolutionary subjects of the East may not corrupt his obedient children of the West.

To the outward eye, the papal government pays a slight tribute to the increased demands of the times. There is more decency in the lives of the clergy; there is more done for the poor. But it is not eleemosynary charity that is needed—it is the spirit of improvement, just laws and an upright administration—none of these exist; and even scientific knowledge, encouraged in other parts of the peninsula, is forbidden. Meanwhile, penal laws are slight, and seldom enforced. There is, some fifteen miles from the city, a miserable collection of huts, in the middle of a tract of country, the peculiar haunt of *mal' aria*; it is called Campo Morto, and is an asylum of the Church. All criminals, who fear being taken, fly hither. The spot, consecrated as an asylum, is watched by soldiers. The fugitive who once enters the fatal bounds, never dares leave them. Three years is the extent to which a man can drag out

existence in this pestilential atmosphere. So here the hardened criminal comes to die, in his desire to escape from death. He is soon struck by fever, grows feeble and emaciated ; and at his appointed hour is gathered to the grave.

The papal government is considered the worst in Italy ; and the temporal rule of the Church is looked upon as the chief source of the nation's misfortunes. This is no novel assertion. You may remember Dante's apostrophe :—

“ Ahi, Costantin, di quanto mal fu matre,
Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote,
Che da te prese il primo ricco patre.”

In the middle ages the temporal power of the Popes urged them on to many acts of unjustifiable aggression ; yet, as the faith of nations in those days made them strong, the people were, for the most part, their friends ; kings, their enemies—and often they made the latter tremble on their thrones, while they showed themselves the protectors of the former. The Popes were then Guelphs, and watched over civil liberty, till attachment to temporal riches turned them into Ghibellines, and led them to support the pretensions of sovereigns to absolute power. Savanorola denounced this unholy alliance as subversive of the purity, and even existence, of the Church. As faith decayed, and reform grew

imminent, the compact between the head of a religion that preached equality, and the sovereigns, who aimed at despotism, was sealed: while as the revenues of the Church, so lately swollen by tributes from all the Christian world, decreased, the pontiff's clung more tenaciously to the few miles of territory which they claimed as their own.*

Before the first French Revolution, English travellers denounced the temporal rule of the Popes

* “Ahi, la vedete;

Di porpora è vestita; oro, monili,
Gemme tutta l'aggravano; le bianche
Vesti, delizia del primier marito,
Che or sta nel cielo, ella perdè nel fango.
Però di nomi e di blasfemi è piena,
E nella fronte sua scrisse; *Mistero*.
Ahi, la sua voce a consolar gli afflitti
Non s'ode più; tutti minaccia, e crea
Con perenni anatemi all' alme incerte
Inestfabili pene; gl' infelici,
Qui lo sian tutti, nel commun dolore
Correano ad abbraccisarsi, e la crudele
Di Cristo in nome gli ha divisi; i padri
Inimica coi figli, e le consorti
Dai mariti disgiunge, e pon la guerra
Fra unanimi fratelli: è del Vangelo
Interprete crudel: l' odio s' impara
Nel libro dell' amor.”

* * * *

— “il mondo ignora

S' ella più d' oro o più di sangue ha sete.
Perchè salì costei dalle profonde
Viscere della terra al Campidoglio?
Fu bella e grande nelle sue prigioni.”

Niccolini; Arnaldo da Brescia.

as corrupt and odious ; it subsists now as it did then—only things are worse—partly, because all that does not improve must deteriorate ; partly, that the uses and end of government are better understood, and abuses become more torturing and intolerable ; and partly, because the checks and restraints which time and custom opposed to their tyranny are now all swept away.

The Pope and his prelates, alone, are invested with political, legislative, and administrative authority, and constitute the State. From education and from system they are despotic, and repel every liberal notion, every social progress. The people pay and obey : all the offices, all the employments, great and small, are in the hands of the clergy. From the Pope to the lowest priestly magistrate, all live on the public revenues, whence springs a system of clients, which existing principally in Rome, yet extends over the whole of the papal dominions, and creates a crowd of dependants devoted to the clergy. Corruption is the mainspring of the State, which rests on the cupidity which the absence of all incentive to, or compensation for, honest labour inspires : yet nearly all are poor, and poorest is the Head of the whole ; who, shrinking from all improvement, fearful if the closed valves were opened, he should admit in one rushing stream, with industry

and knowledge, rebellion, yet finds that the fresh burthens which his necessities cause him to impose on the people fail to increase his revenue.

The Romans, themselves, submit without repining, their state has existed, such as it is, for centuries ; the abode of the Pope and concourse of strangers enrich — the Church ceremonies amuse them. But out of Rome the cry has been loud, and will be repeated again and again. The Marches bordering the Adriatic, Romagna and the four legations, (four cities, each governed by a Cardinal legate), suffer evils comparatively new to them ; and the memory of better days incites them to endeavour to recover their former independence. These states formed, it is true, a portion of the pontifical dominions before the French revolution ; but they existed then on a different footing, and enjoyed privileges of which they are now deprived. Bologna in especial considers herself aggrieved.

During the reign of Pope Nicholas V., driven by the political necessities of the times, Bologna placed itself under the protection of the papal government. The city engaged to pay an annual tribute, and to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Pontiff, while he, on the other hand, guaranteed its independence, and a representative senate to rule the state. Such was its position till the French invasion

of 1796. The Congress of Vienna, in 1814, among its other misdeeds, made over the four legations to the Pope. They became a part of the patrimony of St. Peter; their municipal rights were abolished, and, contrary to every stipulation, they were reduced to the same condition as the ancient subjects of the Pope. At first the Pontiffs thought it necessary to take some steps to reconcile them to the loss of their ancient privileges. They promised them laws in accordance with the improved notions of the times; and that the code of Napoleon should continue in force. These promises were never fulfilled, and a farrago of laws was imposed impossible to be understood, and for ever changing; as each new Pope, supported by his infallibility, makes new ones at pleasure, while the corrupt mode in which they are administered increases the vexation of the people. A diminution of their burthens was also promised, but they continued as high as ever, without those attendant circumstances, that, in the time of the French, compensated for heavy taxations. Money was then spent in constructing roads and other useful public works; now the whole treasure is employed to pension the clergy, and to support in splendour the state and luxury of the Cardinals.

LETTER XXI.

Insurrection of 1831.—Occupation of Ancona by the French.

IF a revolutionary spark is lighted up any where in Europe, the fire bursts forth in Italy. The misgovernment above mentioned is the cause that latterly Romagna has been the centre of these insurrectionary movements, but there has never been sufficient union or strength to secure success. When the French revolution of 1830 occurred, the surviving Carbonari and the heads of other secret societies believed that the moment was propitious to their designs. The government of Louis-Philippe, desirous of drawing away from France the storm that brooded over her from Russia and Austria, excited two unfortunate enslaved countries, Poland and Italy, to rebel. It proclaimed the principle of non-intervention. Marshal Soult exclaimed in the Chamber of Peers:—"The principle of non-intervention shall henceforth be ours; but on condition that it shall be respected by others." These

solemn declarations satisfied the Italian conspirators. Central Italy, that is, the northern pontifical states in chief, with the duchy of Modena, was to be the focus of their movement, and the chiefs believed that they would be strong enough, at least in Romagna, to cope with the armies of their sovereign, if Austria were not permitted to pour its tens of thousands beyond the boundaries of Lombardy.

I have asked Italians for some account of the troubles of those times. "I fear," was the reply, "that it will be difficult to tell any thing worthy to be recorded. Horrible disasters, acts of incredible bravery, admirable instances of self-devotion, were found side by side with atrocious crimes; but all so scattered and individual, that it is scarcely possible to group the events together so as to form a narrative."

Discontent, particularly among the upper classes, was general all over Italy; yet few were willing to risk life and fortune for a cause of which they despaired. The actual revolt was therefore confined to the heads of the secret societies—many of them in exile, and a few thousand young men. The want of talent in some, and of honesty in others among the leaders, led to every disaster. They roused and gathered together bands of ardent youths, holding out to them false hopes of a judicious and well-

regulated insurrection, aided by the power of France. Five thousand lads, chiefly of good birth, taken from their boyish studies, withdrawn from the caresses of their mothers, from the pleasures of their homes, without experience, without forethought, who had scarcely reached the threshold of life—rash and untaught, embarked on the difficult and dangerous path of revolt. Their only tie in common was the desire of driving the stranger from their country. They had none to counsel, none to encourage, none to lead; they entrusted the conduct of their attempt to men who, either from timidity or treachery, hung back when they ought to have shewn boldness, and neutralised the small power of aggression which they possessed. They were confronted by a hundred thousand Imperialists, veteran soldiers, supported by all the material of war.

The result was such as might have been expected. As soon as Louis-Philippe felt secure on his throne, he was eager to see an end put to the commotions excited by the revolution of thirty. He deserted the Italian cause. The leaders had no boldness, no military skill—the youths whom they commanded showed bravery, but were too inefficient, few, and ill-armed, to cope with a large, disciplined, and veteran army. The end was defeat and surrender; then came the violation of treaties, death, and exile. It would

strike with pity the coldest heart to draw but a slight sketch of the various misery that befel individuals. Many a domestic drama of harrowing tragic interest convulsed families, deprived of their noblest offspring; and whether the bereaved parents were base enough to disclaim and cast them forth, or whether they mourned in bitterness over their fate, the misery was the same. It is not yet ended: England and France still swarm with unfortunate exiles—the better portion of the insurgents, who sigh to return to their country, but who will not in hardship and banishment, make those sacrifices of principle which would at once restore them to rank and wealth.

The occupation of Ancona by the French is an event quite distinct from the insurrection of Romagna, though our vague recollections confuse them together. Abandoned by the French, hemmed in by an Austrian army, the insurgents had surrendered, and the pontifical flag again waved over the citadel of Ancona. Still Romagna was full of commotions, occasioned by their desire for some amelioration of the laws. The five Powers of Europe interfered to prevail on the Pope to yield in some degree to the desires of his subjects. His answer was an edict that overthrew all hope, and confirmed the worst abuses—the superiority of the

ecclesiastical courts over the civil, the minor punishments for the clergy compared with the laity, and the continuation of the Inquisition. To enforce these edicts the Pope, helped by Austria, transacted a loan, and declared his intention of sending troops to occupy the four legations.

The account of this military occupation is one of the most frightful passages of modern history. The papal regiments were recruited from the prisons, and formed of bands of *San Fedisti*—the name of troops half brigands, half soldiers, formed by the priests in opposition to the *Carbonari*, whose frightful history you may find in the pages of Coletta. This soldiery committed every excess : whether they met with resistance, or, hoping to disarm their ferocity, they were welcomed in the towns as friends, the result was the same—outrage, rapine, massacre. The spirit of the people was roused, and Cardinal Albani's army, stained by multiplied acts of barbarity, no longer sufficed for the mastery of the whole of Romagna. Succour was requested from Austria, and promptly afforded. Six thousand Austrians, dragging with them the five thousand brigands rather than troops, under the pay of the Head of the Catholic Church, entered Bologna a second time. The severest discipline was enjoined to the German soldiers, and strictly observed. Prince Metternich

was praised for his interference ; the result showed his secret intentions. The Italian populace compared the discipline and moderation of the Germans with the recent excesses of the papal soldiery, and it was hoped that an impression would be made of the preference that ought to be given to the Austrian over the pontifical sway, which hereafter might serve the former in good stead.

When the Pope declared his intention of a military occupation of the discontented provinces, the five Powers, whose ambassadors had just been urging milder measures, with one exception only, approved. England, represented by Sir George Scymour, expressed dissent, and her minister withdrew from the councils of the other diplomatic agents. On the other hand, France expressed her approbation in emphatic terms. The second occupation of Bologna by the Austrians, and the dexterity shown by Prince Metternich, however, made a deep impression on Casimir Perrier, then Minister for Foreign Affairs. This was a step in advance made by the Austrian under cover of friendship ; but if Romagna was to be lost to the Pope, he saw no reason why the French should not divide the spoil, and he suddenly resolved to occupy Ancona. A ship and two frigates received orders to sail for that city, and carry thither eleven hundred men, under the command of a naval

captain Gallois, and of Colonel Combes. General Cubières was named commander-in-chief of the expedition. He set out for Rome, by way of Leghorn, for the purpose of communicating with the Pope with regard to this seizure of one of his principal cities. The French government calculated that General Cubières would have time to see the Pope, and obtain his consent, and reach Ancona before Captain Gallois and Colonel Combes could arrive; but contrary winds delayed Cubières, while on the other hand, the little French fleet doubled the coasts of Italy with an expedition that could not be foreseen, and which indeed excited general surprise; so that when Cubières arrived at Rome he found the French ambassador in a violent rage; the tidings of the occupation of Ancona having reached Rome a few hours before; the Pontiff also was inexpressibly indignant.

Ancona was taken in the night of the 22-23d February, 1832. On their arrival, Colonel Combes and Captain Gallois did not find Cubières. He held the instructions of government, without which, strictly speaking, they could not commence the attack. They did not, however, hesitate to assume the responsibility of the assault—a resolution which they regarded due to the honour of their flag. The fleet cast anchor three miles distant from the city.

A portion of the French soldiers disembarked without impediment, and in a short time, by a hurried march, they arrived under the walls. The gates were closed ; the papal troops would not open them. The sappers of the 66th regt. broke one open with furious blows of the axe, and were aided in the work by some of the populace. The French dispersed themselves quickly in the city, disarming the posts. Colonel Iazzarini was made prisoner in his bed before he awoke ; and thus, by a *coup-de-main*, the French possessed themselves of the city. At day-break the rest of the troops were disembarked. Colonel Combes, at the head of a battalion, marched against the citadel. The pontifical troops, frightened, yielded immediately ; the French were received as friends into the fortress, and the tri-coloured flag was hoisted. The people of Ancona co-operated actively with the French, and not a drop of blood was shed ; the inhabitants looked on the occupation as the beginning of liberty, and rejoicing and gladness everywhere prevailed. The Italian tricolor floated in all the streets, and over every square. The French raised the cry of *Vive la liberté!* which was responded to by the Italians with tumults of joy. The governor of the province and the commandant of the piazza were made prisoners, but afterwards set at liberty ; they left Ancona. The state prisons

were thrown open, and several chiefs of the insurgents liberated. The city was that night illuminated, and the theatres resounded with patriotic songs. A staff officer got upon a bench in one of the principal cafés, and brandishing a naked sword, declared that the regiment occupying Ancona was merely a vanguard, which announced the liberty of Italy.

All Europe was astonished by this event. Austria, in its first movement of surprise, demanded categorical explanations; at the same time that the general of the Austrian troops stationed at Bologna, published a proclamation, in which he declared that the French had occupied Ancona through the same motives, and for the same ends, which had guided the Austrians in Romagna. The Pope gave immediate orders that his troops should retire from Ancona, and that the provincial government should be removed to Osimo: but this anger on the part of the Vatican was of short duration; it listened to the declarations and protestations of the French government, which had in truth no notion of favouring Italian liberty, but intended simply to check Austria, or at least obtain a part of the spoils, if the Pope lost Romagna. Sad were the conditions upon which the French were permitted to prolong their sojourn at Ancona. The part they filled afterwards redounded to their shame in the eyes of the

Italians. They averred that the French soldiers, until the evacuation, only served as sbirri of the papal power. And while the government of France held language openly that made Europe believe that Ancona, while in their possession, was a place of refuge for the liberals, it by its acts proved to the various cabinets, that its views were in unison with those of Austria, Prussia, and Russia. A few years ago Ancona was made over again to the Pontiff, the French saving their credit by having the reputation of obtaining in exchange the pardon of some of the exiles of Lombardy; which, in fact, Austria only wanted a pretext and a fair occasion to grant.

At present the spirit of revolt is checked, but not quelled in the pontifical states. A volcanic fire smoulders near the surface, ready at every moment to burst forth in a flame. The whole of the country before disturbed, the Marches, Romagna, the four legations, together with the population of the mountains, are bound together by secret associations, and wait impatiently for the favourable moment when to break their chains. These secret societies, unfortunately, are bad means for seeking a good result; and it is to be feared that the country will never attain a high moral tone and a true feeling of independence, till the means used by their leaders are changed. .

Secret associations ought to be particularly eschewed by the Italians, as tending to foster their principal defect—their cunning. The violence of their passions, which they are so little taught to control, is the source of much crime and unhappiness; but under better laws they would be checked. The cowardice of which they are accused, I regard as a mistake: mingled with other soldiers the Italians are as brave as they—it is the want of leaders which has occasioned this low estimation of their courage. No troops will hold together who have not confidence in their generals. In all instances of their defeat it seems evident that their disasters were not occasioned by cowardice in the soldiers, but absence of military skill among those in command.

The habit of deception is the worst fault of the Italians; accustomed to look on the dark side of human nature and to disbelieve in its virtues, they are ever awake to ward off covert injury by astuteness; while the purer virtues, stainless honour and unspotted truth, belong to few (yet to a few they do belong), among them.

The evil has been fostered by the bad use to which the confessional has been put during troubled times; *

Nelle chiese—

I più astuti del clero a udir son posti,

by the institution of a secret police by the governments, and by the spread of secret societies. For what is held mysterious, concealed by oaths, and carried on in the dark, must use falsehood as a shield, and terror as a weapon.

Little good, I am afraid, has been operated by these associations on the character of the people; and the real interests of the country must result from the improvement of the moral sense. Meanwhile, they occasion frequent and partial insurrections, that keep the sovereigns in alarm, but do not advance their cause. It cannot be expected that Italy should be able to liberate itself in a time of lethargic peace like the present. And the attempts of the few who, from time to time, are driven by indignation and shame to take up arms, are but the occasion of tears and grief. They form a band of hidden and obscure victims, which each year that power devours that holds them in slavery. It may even be doubted whether an European commotion would give an occasion favourable to Italy.

Gli altrui peccati, e li sommesse, arcane
Parole mormorate ai proni orecchi
Sono alla nostra libertà fatali.
Perchè nuda e tremante al lor corpetto
Ogni alma è tratta dalle sue lattèbre,
E assoluto non è chi si confessa
Se gli altri non accusa."

Niccolini ; Arnaldo da Brescia.

We must not forget that the people are demoralised and degenerate. The present affords no glimmering light by which we may perceive how the regeneration of Italy will be effected. It is one of the secrets of futurity at which it is vain to guess. Yet the hour must and will come. For there are noble spirits who live only in this hope ; and every man of courage and genius throughout the country—and several such exist—consecrates his moral and intellectual faculties to this end only.

LETTER XXII.

Sorrento.—Capri.—Pompeii.

SORRENTO, JUNE 1.

It seems to me as if I had never before visited Italy—as if now, for the first time, the charm of the country was revealed to me. At every moment the senses, lapped in delight, whisper—this is Paradise. Here I find the secret of Italian poetry: not of Dante; he belonged to Etruria and Cisalpine Gaul: Tuscany and Lombardy are beautiful—they are an improved France, an abundant, sunshiny England—but here only do we find another earth and sky. Here the poets of Italy tasted the sweets of those enchanted gardens which they describe in their poems—and we wonder at their bright imaginations; but they drew only from reality—the reality of Sorrento. Call to mind those stanzas of Tasso, those passages of Berni and Ariosto, which have most vividly transported you into gardens of delight, and in them you will find the best description of the charms of this spot. I had visited Naples before,

but that was in winter—and beautiful as I thought it, I did not then guess what this land is in all the glory of its summer dress.

Here is the house in which Tasso was born—what wonder that the gardens of Armida convey to the mind the feeling that the poet had been carried away by enchantment to an Elysium, whose balmy atmosphere hung about him, and he wrote under its influence.—So indeed was it—here is the radiance, here the delights which he describes—here he passed his childhood; the fragrance of these bowers, the glory of this sky, haunted him in the dark cell of the convent of St. Anna.

I know not whether I should prefer the view of the bay which his house (now occupied as an hotel) commands, to our own from the Cocumella—the scene from his windows is certainly completer; situated more in the bend of the bay, turned northwards towards Vesuvius, he looked upon a circle of mountain crags, embracing the sea; our view is more turned to the west—it is less picturesque—perhaps more sublime.


The portion of the bay that belongs to Sorrento is singularly formed. For the most part steep cliffs rise from the water, with here and there a break, where there intervenes a short space of sands, hedged round by cliffs. The cliffs are perforated

with caverns, some open to the air, and clothed with luxuriant vegetation; others scooped deep in the face of the rock. Many of them have been enlarged, and openings made for ventilation, and passages cut down to the sands, and up to the gardens above. Every house almost has one of these *calate* or descents, down from the heights above to the beach; some cut in the face of the cliffs—corkscrew galleries—some communicating with the caverns; most of them are walled up to prevent smuggling. I believe when the family to whom the house belongs resides on the spot, at their request the *calata* belonging to them is opened. One of the royal family had been staying at or near the Cocumella; the passage was opened for their convenience, and the keys were left at our inn; so we had full command of the descent from the garden of our house. Our *calata* is considered one of the best; it opens into a huge double cavern, which tradition or imagination has appropriated to Polyphemus. It is large enough for him and his flock, and within is an inner cave, where the giant-shepherd stored his cheeses, and against whose rough surface the luckless voyagers clung, hoping to escape: the rock he flung to sink the vessel of Ulysses still lies a furlong from the mouth of the cavern. In the morning nothing can be cooler than the sands shaded by the cliff; later

in the day the sun descending to set behind Ischia, strikes on the rocks and beach, and they become burningly hot.

P—— has got a nice sailing-boat over from Naples ; too small, but still a wonderfully safe, good boat, considering its size, and we have a *marinaro* also from Naples, to whom it belongs ; he takes care of it all day, and sleeps in it at night. He is a young fellow, and certainly never shows any signs of timidity, but considers his little skiff charmed from danger within the bay ; beyond, the seas are far heavier ; his father *ha timore* and will not let him venture. He tries to persuade us to go with him to Ischia and Capri. I am shy of this—the boat is so small ; but P—— and his friend often sail some miles from shore, and run down to Castellamare ; and on calm days I go on exploring expeditions into the frequent and strange caves of the coast, or stretch across to the Temple of Neptune, and roam about the ruin-strewed shore. These caverns are mysterious recesses, which the fancy is excited to people with a thousand fairy tales. As I have said, some are like ours of the Cocumella, scooped out in the face of the rock—others, narrow clefts in the rock, open to the sky. Into the strangest you enter by narrow passages, just large enough to let the boat pass ; they are covered at top,

and paved by the waves, which play flickering with a turquoise tint quite peculiar and very beautiful.*

The plain of Sorrento, which is spread on the top of the cliffs that overlook the sea, is shut in all round by a belt of hills—intersected here and there by narrow ravines—clefts, as it were, in the soil, thickly clothed with various trees and underwood. The plain itself is planted with orange trees. These gardens being shut in by high walls, the walks near us are not at all agreeable; therefore, when we leave our terrace, and our beach, and our cavern, it is in a boat or on mules—the rides are delightful. To Capo del Monte, which those who live nearer to Sorrento than ourselves can reach by a walk, and therefore to live nearer has advantages—but I like ur greater retirement better; or to the Calmaldoli, or to the Conti delle Fontanelle, a height whence we command a view of the Gulf of Salerno, the rocks of the Syrens, and the long line of coast that runs southward, on which Pæstum is situated; and of Capri rising abrupt and dark. I can only compare the difference between these enchanting scenes and those of other countries

* Mrs. Starke lived for some years at the Cocumella, at Sorrento. Her account of the place and scenery around, is both accurate and well written, and for this part of Italy she is an excellent guide. Mr. Cooper, the author of "The Spy," has written very agreeable "Excursions in Italy;" the most interesting portion of which regards Sorrento.

which have heretofore delighted me, by saying, that in all others it was like seeing a lovely countenance behind a dusky veil ; here the veil is withdrawn, and the senses ache with the effulgent beauty which is revealed.

JUNE 3.

To-day we visited Capri. The winds here are so regular, that with the exception of a scirocco which will sometimes intervene, you know exactly in summer-time on what you may depend. At noon the Ponente rises—a west wind, brisk and fresh, which crisps the sea into sparkling waves, that dance beneath the sun. This wind goes on increasing till about five or six in the afternoon, and then dies away ; at about nine or ten an air comes off from Vesuvius—a land-wind, in fact—which lasts till morning. Thus to go to Capri, it was necessary to set out early to profit by this breeze, which wafted us southward to the island. I do not know anything more striking than the manner in which, as we stretch out from our bay, the island of Capri, with its two peaks and beetling cliffs, rises upon us. As we ran down towards it, headland after headland opened, and disclosed the bays between. In two hours we reached the island, and ran into the little bay in which the town of Capri is situated. We then transferred ourselves to two small boats, for

the purpose of visiting the Grotto Azzurro. We were rowed under the high, dark, bare, perpendicular cliffs, and with anxious curiosity I looked for the opening to the grotto. The mountains grew higher, the precipices more abrupt and black, as we rowed slowly in the deep calm water beneath their shadow. At length we came to a small opening; it was necessary to sit at the bottom of the boat, as it shot through the narrow, low, covered entrance; within, the strangest sight is revealed: we entered a large cavern, formed by the sea; the hue resembles that which I mentioned as belonging to the caves of the Sorrentine coast; only here it is brighter—a turquoise, milky, pellucid, living azure. The white roof and walls of the cave reflect the tints, and the shimmering motion of the waves being also mirrored on the rock, the effect is more fairy-like and strange than can be conceived. This cave was discovered by two Englishmen, who went to swim under the cliffs, and penetrated by chance its narrow opening. It deserves the renown it has gained. I cannot explain from what effect of the laws of light this singular and beautiful hue proceeds. Partly it is the natural azure of the waves of this bright sea, which, entering, reflects the snow-white cavern, and is turned as it were into transparent milk; another cause may be, that the walls of the cavern do not reach deeper

than the surface of the water ; they just touch it—and the sea flows beneath. The water is icy cold, and the adventure would be perilous ; but a good swimmer might be excited to dive beneath the paving water, strike out under the cave, and seek for wonders beyond.

After lingering some time in this favourite grotto of the Nereids, which they have, since the creation till the present time, kept sacred from our intrusion, we returned to Capri, and hired donkeys for our ascent to the palace of Tiberius, which is situated on the summit of one of the mountain-peaks of the island. We had several guides ; the woman that accompanied me attracted me by her extreme beauty. She had that noble contour of countenance that I so particularly admire ; a beauty at once full of dignity and expression. The sun burnt bright above, and the way was fatiguing. We clambered up through vineyards that clothe the mountains' sides, and *podere*, or small farms, sown with grain, and prolific in the huge prickly pear, which grow as giants. We reached at last the remains of the palace of Tiberius ; a part of the walls and many portions of mosaic pavement remain, as well as the relics of a way down to the sea, of very solid yet elaborate workmanship. The view from the summit, where a portion of the ruins has been turned into a little

church, is more grand than anything I ever saw. The Bay of Naples on one side; that of Salerno on the other; with the coast on which Pæstum is situated, bounding the eastern horizon. There is a peculiarity in the way in which the steep promontories of the southern Italian coast abut into the sea, and in the hues of ocean, as it embraces the rocky shores, which those who have not visited the South cannot conceive; which I never saw till I came here, but which satisfies the mind that this is beauty; that here, God has let fall upon earth the mantle of glory which otherwise is gathered up among the angels!

We had brought provisions with us, and dined on the sort of platform at the summit; and here, in one of the ruined chambers, where the mosaic pavement is entire, the peasants danced the Tarantella. On mainland, this dance is forbidden, at least, for the two sexes to dance it together;—why, I cannot guess: as far as we saw, it is more decent than the waltz. The couples *set* and turn round each other, but without touching even each other's hands, for these are occupied by the castanets. Two or three of the women were handsome; but none so attractive as the woman who was my guide.

As we descended, I talked to her. The wretched lot of these poor people is very sad. In England

we see and read of the squalid condition of the poor; and when it is contrasted with the luxury of the rich, we feel deeply, "That there is something rotten in the state." But while we are aware that our climate fearfully increases the sufferings of the poor, we know that to keep out cold and hunger is costly, and the suffering does not appear so causeless and arbitrary as in this fairy island; here, where the sun in all his splendour kisses earth, which, well cultivated and fertile, yields plenty; and where, moreover, the sea is abundant in fish; the heart rebels yet more vehemently against the hungry poverty of the hard-working peasants. Fish and meat they never touch: all that is caught of the former is taken to Naples. Maccaroni they get on festivals: at other times, they live on vegetables—nothing so wholesome as the potato—the prickly pear chiefly. The better off among them indulge now and then in *polenta*, the flour of Indian corn made into porridge. They have no milk; weak sour wine, or water, is their drink. One result of this bad fare is the mortality among the children. My Juno-looking guide had had four children: one only survived. Poor little fellow! he ran beside his mother; and she looked on him with anxious fondness, for his complexion and figure all spoke disease.

To suffer is a different thing under this sky. They have had food, they work hard; but Nature is their friend; they are not pinched with cold nor racked by rheumatic pains. Thus my poor woman, in whom I grew interested, had nothing morose—scarcely anything plaintive—about her. “*Sono sempre allegra*,” she said. “I am gay—we ought to be gay.” “*Siamo come Dio vuole*.” “We live as God pleases, and must not complain. My heart aches when I remember my poor children now in Paradise; I cry when I think of them; and that little fellow,” and she cast an anxious, maternal glance on him—“he is not well” (heaven knows, he was not). “*Ma, allegra, Signora*”—“the Virgin will help us;” and she began, in a sweet voice, to sing a plaintive hymn to the Virgin. Poor people! their religion is hung round with falsehood; but it is a great, a real comfort, to them. Sickness and all evil comes from God, and must be borne, therefore, with patience; and the great duty is to be gay under all, and to serve God with a cheerful, as well as a pure, heart. I should have liked to have tried, at least, to have done some real good to this woman, whose countenance, and voice, and conversation, gave her distinction. Nothing could be more simple and unpretending than her talk; but it had a stamp of heart, joined to that

touch of the imaginative, peculiar to the Italian peasantry.

English tourists get very angry at the perpetual demands made on their purses during their excursions. "*Dammi qualche co'*," salutes our ear too often. But, poor people, who can wonder! I have told you how they fare. At Sorrento oranges are the staple of the place—that and hewn stones; the poor man who has a mule considers himself comparatively well off; he and his mule carrying oranges and stones, support his family. They often work all night, lading the boats going to Naples with oranges, and by day they labour at the quarries. The nobles do not reside on their estates, and there is no help for the poor; there are many convents, but none among them are charitably disposed, so that, except the archbishop, there is not a single individual or community that turns a pitying eye on the ill-paid, over-worked labourers of the soil; while the abundant riches that flow from this soil and from their ceaseless industry, are drained away to Naples. The people are particularly handsome; even the old are good-looking: they say there is something in the soil and air particularly good for health and comeliness. I have seen no *hags*. Old women, with happy-looking faces, graced by the placid picturesque beauty of age, sit at their doors spinning.

No one can talk to them without perceiving latent, under ignorance and superstition, great natural abilities, and that heartfelt piety which springs (as our higher virtues do,) from the imagination which warms and colours their faith. Poor people! how I long for a fairy wand which would make them proprietors of the earth which they till, but must not reap. How sad a thing is human society: yet it is comforting, even where we find the laws by which it is said to be held together—but which ought rather to be likened to an iron yoke, pressing it down and depriving it of its native strength and elasticity—yet, I say, it warms my heart when I find the individuals that compose a population, poor, humble, ignorant, misguided, yet endowed with some of the brightest gifts of our nature, and bearing in their faces the stamp of intelligence and feeling. I never lived among a people I liked so well as these Sorrentines. I hope I am not deceived: but Mr. Cooper, who sojourned here a few months, and Mrs. Starke, who lived here for years, evidently regard them with more liking and esteem than the poorer classes usually inspire.

JUNE 15TH.

Our way of life is regular enough, as in hot countries it always must be. The mornings are

cool and pleasant: my bed-room window, with a balcony, looks on the northern mountains; and the first opening of my eyes is upon orange gardens, shadowy groves, and green mountain-tops, with peeps of the sea between. At noon, when the sea-breeze rises, my friends sail; sometimes, when the breeze is not too *stiff*, I join them, and we stretch out till the whole of Capri opens on us. When I am not there they venture further, and they bathe: the sea is so inviting, that they spend an hour or two in the water. We dine (and our cook being good and the viands excellent, we dine well) at two. At four or five we either betake ourselves to the boat, and cross the bay to the Temple of Neptune, which is at the point of the first headland—or the mules come to the door, and we take various rides; or, if we at times repeat the same, its beauty always seems new. We are shut out from walks in the immediate vicinity—as to trudge between high stone walls is not pleasant; but in our excursions we find plenty of occasion to clamber up and down the steep mountain-paths. The hills are bright with the broom in full flower, and the myrtle begins to show its stars among its bright-pointed leaves. On the plains, which are often found near the summits of the hills—the rocky crags rising higher round as a hedge and shelter, wheat is sown, and flourishes.

One of our favourite rides is to the other side of the promontory, where a natural arch once stood, resembling the Presbisch Thor of the Saxon Switzerland; it is now broken and ruined. Once, going there, my friends thought that they could easily reach the sands beneath and bathe, or find a boat to take them to the rocks of the Syrens; but after a rough precipitous descent of some length, they found the way grow on them: they were apparently as far off as ever from the sea, and they returned.

I spend the evenings on our terrace. The nights here are wonderful; and I am never weary of observing the loveliness of the skies. Twenty-four o'clock, a moveable hour which is fixed for half an hour after sunset, never, in this climate, falls later than half-past eight. By that time it is night; but the extreme purity of the atmosphere gives to darkness a sort of brilliancy, such as a black shining object has. The sea is dark and bright at the same time; the high coast around does not assume that gigantic, misty appearance, hills do in the North during dusk, but they stand out as well defined as by day. If there be a moon, we see it floating in mid-air. We perceive at once that it is not a shining shape, plastered, as it were, against the sky; but a ball which, all bright, or partly dusky, hangs pendant. Its light is painfully bright; the ex-

treme glittering whiteness fatigues the eye more than daylight. In the North, we often repine that we have not two moons, so always to enjoy the use of our eyes in the absence of the sun; in the South, the interlunar nights are an agreeable change, at times almost a relief. By the moonlight we can perceive the smoke ascend from the crater of Vesuvius; if she desert the night, a lambent flame shoots up at intervals. I may have wearied you by my various accounts of the evening hours which, to a lover of nature, are so enchanting. In other places a sense of tenderness, a softening influence, has fallen on my heart at that time; but here, the glory of absolute immeasurable beauty mantles all things at all times.

JUNE 20.

—— Yet not so. Lo! a scirocco comes to blot the scene. Nothing can be stranger than this scirocco: at its first breath, the sea grows dull, leaden, slate-coloured—all its transparency is gone. The view of the opposite shore is hidden in mist. The near mountains wear a deeper green, but have lost all brightness and cast wierd shadows on the dull waters. This wind coming from the south-east is with us a land wind. It rolls huge waves on the beach of Naples; but beneath our cliffs the sea

is calm—such a calm!—it looks so treacherous, that even if you did not hear of the true state of things, you would hesitate to trust yourself to it. At a short distance from the shore the wind plays wild pranks; here and there it seizes the water as a whirlwind, and you see circles emerge from a centre, spread round and fade away. P—— went out in his boat about a hundred yards from our cavern; even there, though in apparent calm, the skiff was whirled round, and nothing but letting go the sheet on the instant prevented her from being capsized.

The heat is excessive. Every one appears to be seized with feverish illness: nobody wishes to eat or move. The early setting and late rising of the sun in this high latitude, making the nights long, gives the earth and atmosphere time to cool; and it is thus that the heat of summer is often not so oppressive as in the North; otherwise it would be intolerable. Imagine our Dresden length of day with a Neapolitan temperature: no one could bear it and live. But our nights are cool; our early mornings even chill, and thus nature is refreshed: only, this does not occur during the periods of scirocco; then, night and day, the heat lies like a heavy garment round our limbs. Fortunately, three days is its utmost, one or two its usual, extent; it vanishes as it came, no one knows how. Nature

and our human spirits come forth as after an eclipse; the world revived looks up and resumes its natural healthy appearance.

JUNE 23.

We have visited Pompeii. A greater extent of the city has been dug out and laid open since I was there before, so that it has now much more the appearance of a town of the dead. You may ramble about and lose yourself in the many streets. Bulwer, too, has peopled its silence. I have been reading his book, and I have felt on visiting the place much more as if *really* it had been one: full of stirring life, now that he has attributed names and possessors to its houses, passengers to its streets. Such is the power of the imagination. It can not only give "a local habitation and a name" to the airy creations of the fancy and the abstract ideas of the mind, but it can put a soul into stones, and hang the vivid interest of our passions and our hopes upon objects otherwise vacant of name or sympathy. Not indeed that Pompeii could be such, but the account of its "Last Days" has cast over it a more familiar garb, and peopled its desert streets with associations that greatly add to their interest.

LETTER XXIII.

Excursion to Amalfi.

JULY 10TH.

I HAVE always had a great desire to penetrate into the south of Italy, which I believe to be the most beautiful country in the world; joining the rich aspect of culture to the graces of nature,

“In all her wildness, all her majesty,
As in that elder time, ere man was made.”*

If I were a man, I know of no enterprise that would please my imagination more than seeking, in this district, for the traces of lost wealth, science, and civilisation. These blessings flourished in this neighbourhood at two distinct periods, apparently widely separated from each other; yet, if examined, we might find that the link had never been broken. Magna Grecia was the mother of many philosophers, and the richest portion of ancient Italy; and there is nothing violent in the supposition, that Amalfi, hemmed in by mountains, and Salerno, almost

* Rogers's Italy.

equally sheltered, should have preserved and extended, rather than originated, the trade and science, which rendered them famous at a time when, all around, every effort of human enterprise was merged in offensive and defensive wars.

Amalfi was the first republic of modern Italy. As the power of the Roman Empire waxed weak, and the transplanting of the seat of empire to Constantinople, placed Italy in the novel position of a distant neglected province, frequently invaded by barbarians, the fabric of national government fell to pieces, while municipal communities remained. Two of these, from their happy position on the sea, and the great traffic there carried on by means of the Mediterranean, were eminently prosperous. One in the north, Venice, acquired power, and preserved its independence for centuries; the other in the south, Amalfi, was swallowed up by the kingdom of Naples, after having been pillaged by the Pisans in 1137—for thus early did municipal rivalry, the bane of Italy, begin to divide and ravage the peninsula. It seems to me that sound knowledge of the results of political institutions might be gathered from studying the state of society in a town whose citizens were, when free, intelligent and courageous—whose maritime laws, instituted at a time (the ninth century) when Europe was sunk

in barbarism, has served as a basis for every subsequent commercial code—who covered the sea with their ships—who almost discovered the mariner's compass. What are they now ?

Their intelligence, their capacities, I am sure remain ; their affections also must warm their hearts as kindly ; must we not seek in their political history for the causes wherefore superstition and vice have replaced ardour for science and the virtues of industrious and brave citizens ?

Though I could not fulfil in any way a favourite design of visiting Calabria, yet we have crept on as far as Amalfi. It had been my idea to spend a month in this town, when I could have told you more of the present state of its inhabitants. I was not able to do this ; so, can only mention the impression made by the visit of a day.*

* Among modern historians Sismondi and Gibbon dwelt with pleasure on the commerce and prosperity of Amalfi. It was an oasis where the mind of the historian reposed, fatigued by barbarous wars and innumerable acts of cruelty. Gibbon quotes the description given by Guglielmus Apulus—

“ Nulla magis locuples argento, vestibus, oro,
Pontibus innumeris ; hæc plurimus urbe moratur
Nauta maris cœlique vias aperire peritus.
Huc et Alexandri diversa feruntur ab urbe
Regis, et Antiochi. Quis hæc freta plurima transit.
His Arabes, Indi, Siculi nascuntur et Afri.
Hæc gens est totum prope nobilitata per orbem
Et mercando ferens, et amans mercata referre.”

We had secured a boat to be ready for us at the Marinella, on the other side of the promontory, and set out on mules for the Scaricatojo, the name given to the descent from the mountain that overhangs the eastern sea. We reached the height which we had often before visited, whence a view is commanded of the two seas. To the west the Bay of Naples, landlocked, as we looked on it, by the islands of Ischia and Procida, and the promontory of Misenum; while, more to the north, the shining edifices of the city of Naples are distinctly visible, and in the depth of the bay, Vesuvius rises up immediately from the shore. On the other side, the eye plunged down from the height of the myrtle-clothed mountain on which we stood, to the sea far below, gleaming at the foot of the precipices—vexing itself against the rocks of the Syrens: eastward, the coast that runs in a long line to the south; the lowlands on which Pæstum is situated, with the back-ground of lofty mountains, was this day—as it almost always is—hidden in mist.

The descent of the Scaricatojo is very steep, and long and fatiguing. At first we made light of it; but as we went on under a burning sun, the path grew more craggy and precipitous: sometimes it was formed only of a rough sort of steps cut in the mountain-side, or constructed of shattered masses of rock; or of zigzags, which grew shorter, more

numerous, more precipitous, and more slippery, till we despaired of ever reaching the beach.

But all things human end ; and at last — most agreeable change! — we were seated in a boat beneath the lofty inaccessible hills that rise almost sheer from the water, with here and there a little break, where a brief space of beach intervenes, and a town or village rises beside it. The voyage was not quite as agreeable as it might have been, for there was a swell of the sea, and our little boat was deeply laden with people. We were glad to see Amalfi open on us. *Salvator Rosa* best represents the peculiar beauty of the southern Italian coast; its steep promontories, the varied breaks of its mountainous shores, all green with forest-trees, adorned by isolated ruins, and clothed with a radiance which is the peculiar gift of the atmosphere of this clime ; encircled by the lucid transparency of the tideless sea — for it was here that he often retreated, leading, some have said, a bandit's life,* but most surely a lover and studier of nature ; his landscapes are so many exquisite views taken from this part of the country. Look at them, wherever you can, and learn in what its loveliness consists. The landing-place of the town is open, busy, and cheerful. There is a Capuchin convent most beautifully

* Rogers's Italy.

situated near the sea ; it was secularised by the French, and long served for an hotel. The mother of the present King of Naples often visited Amalfi, and slept at this inn. The expelled monks gathered round her, and led her to consider it a matter of conscience that they should be reinstated. She obtained this favour from her son before she died ; the Capuchins are come back ; and travellers are turned out from what may be fairly named the *most* beautiful inn in the world. The present house, however, is by no means bad, and overlooks the Marina. We obtained good rooms and a tolerable dinner, being waited on by three sons of the host—handy little fellows, from ten to fifteen, who performed their duties promptly and quietly.

As soon as we had rested and were refreshed, we wished, though still much fatigued, to see something of the place. We visited the cathedral, an ancient edifice, built upon the site of a pagan temple, and rambled about the town, which is busy. Though fallen from the commercial prosperity it enjoyed twelve centuries ago, Amalfi carries on considerable traffic, and its citizens are well to do. There is a large manufacture of maccaroni, another of paper, another for working the iron of Elba. Every one can find work, living is cheap, and want is happily unknown.

The paper-mills are picturesquely situated in a ravine, shut in by lofty mountains, beside a cascade ; it was not so far but that we might visit them during the evening. Two donkeys were brought to carry us thither. Accustomed to the excellent mules of Sorrento, we were not prepared for the poor little creatures, with things on their backs which it was ridiculous to call saddles. However, I and a young lady who accompanied me mounted. If you have the book, look at the vignette to "Italy" of Amalfi ; you will perceive its situation, and how just behind the town the mountains are cloven and divided by a deep ravine—our way led up this narrow pass, down which sped a torrent, whose "inland murmur," or rather dashing, was grateful to our ears, long accustomed only to the roaring of the surges of the sea.

The scene was wholly different from anything near Sorrento. The valley and the mountain-sides were beautifully green and fresh—grassy uplands shone between groves of forest trees, and villages with their churches here and there peeped out—while the torrent dashed over the rocks, sparkling and foaming—and dressing its banks, which grew higher and more rocky as we ascended the pass, in luxuriant and bright verdure. Our first visit was to a paper-mill, whence a view of the ravine is commanded—and then we clambered up the hill-side to

the road above. Golden evening gave a refreshing coolness to the air, and picturesque shadows to the hills. It was a scene,—an hour,—when Nature imparts a quick and living enjoyment akin to the transports of love and the ecstacy of music—it touches a chord whose vibration is happiness. Faint from excessive weariness, yet with regret I consented to return. Night with her stars gathered round us, and with much difficulty our poor little stumbling animals carried us back to the town.

This same evening we wished to prepare for our excursion on the morrow; the plan of which was to visit Ravello, and then to descend the mountain to the sea-shore—take boat, and sail to Salerno, and after dinner to drive back to Sorrento.

Our evening's experience showed that the poor little asses were not fit for such an expedition—we must have recourse to the other alternative, *portantini*,—arm-chairs placed on poles, borne by two men; we required three, for the three ladies of the party. P——, and his friend, were to walk.

We were told — but, remember, I consider all that we heard as very problematical as regards truth—we had no time to learn the real state of things, and I relate the story more to show the sort of wild excuses the Italians make when they want to carry a point profitable to themselves—losing to

us. We were told that the bearers of the *portantini* all belonged to a village, Vettici, some miles up the mountain—that when these were wanted they were sent for the previous evening—locked up all night at Amalfi, to prevent them from being enticed away, I don't why or by whom. We were told that we had arrived too late to get these men; that we must engage some of the town's-people. We ought to have four bearers to each chair; thirty men came forward to claim the employment—and the *polizia* begged us to choose twelve from among them. My friends went to the *polizia* for this purpose—the scene was highly comic. Thirty men vociferating, insisting, supplicating—cager. Among these was the master of the boat who was to take us to Salerno, and his three sons—they were evidently respectable men, and at once selected—but among the rest who could choose? My friends could only laugh; they pointed out a dozen as possessing the best physiognomies.

We were to set out early, and therefore retired early. Night scarcely veiled the sea. The quay had been busy all day, lading ships with grain; several parties of men were still at work. It was a lively scene compared with the quiet of the Cocumella, yet so unlike were the tiny barks in the offing, and appearance of the men at work, lading and

unlading vessels, from anything one is accustomed to that the ancient times of Magna Græcia, when, the busy ports sent corn to Rome, occurred; or rather, I confess, that with me another association was awakened. When excited, the mind is apt to recur to the impressions of childhood—like sympathetic ink exposed to fire—the covert but not expunged pictures which the soul first received, revive and become visible. *Les Aventures de Télémaque* recurred to my mind. I was haunted by the description therein given of the busy sea-ports of Tyre and Crete. The broad luminous sea before, the jutting headlands, the not inharmonious cries of the men at work, the frequent tread of their feet, formed a sort of picture which it seemed to me I had seen in childhood drawn by the pen of Fénelon. I went to sleep while it still flitted, as it were, beneath my closed eyelids.

The morrow came, and with it our guide, our chairs, our bearers—such a crowd. The thirty men had been disputing all night as to which among them had been chosen; the conclusion they came to was, that they would all go. Travellers often (I among the number) have had the whole pleasure of an excursion marred by a struggle with guides, muleteers, &c. It is often necessary to contest a thousand points, and to resist exactions, and the

temper gets soured, and the divine influence of nature on the mind is marred. I was determined that I would not lose the pleasure I might snatch during my hasty visit to the outskirts of Calabria, by tormenting myself with these people; for being the one of our party most conversant with Italian, the brunt of the battle must fall upon me. I made up my mind at once that these fellows should have their way, and I would be entertained instead of annoyed by exactions of all kinds.

We had our guide—an erect old man, loquacious enough, with a very amusing assumption of dignity towards the other men. We had our thirty bearers, and in addition (recommended by the police, to keep so large a band in order) two police-officers, with unloaded muskets and cartouche-boxes innocent of ammunition. Eight men devoted themselves to my chair—the best of the number, I believe; and away we went, up the rocky path through the ravine, beside the torrent, beneath the chesnut woods, climbing higher and higher up the mountain-side, the bright golden morning sun flinging long shadows from the hills.

The scenery is quite unlike Sorrento; as far as earth is concerned, it is far more sublime. The mountains are loftier, and more picturesque, parted by deeper and wider ravines, terminated in abrupt

peaks, their sides clothed by magnificent forest-trees; and when we reached a summit and looked around——travellers visit Switzerland and speak of the sublime works of creation among seas of ice and avalanches and towering Alps, bare and craggy, crested with perpetual snow; there, nature is sublime, but she shows the power and the will to harm; here she is gracious as well as glorious; she is our friend, or rather our exalted and munificent queen and benefactress.*

* "Until that moment I was not fully sensible of the vast superiority of the Italian landscapes over all others. Switzerland astonishes, and it even often delights; but Italian nature wins upon you until you come to love it as a friend. I can only liken the perfection of the scene we gazed upon this evening to a feeling almost allied to transport; to the manner in which we dwell upon the serene expression of a beloved and lovely countenance. Other scenes have the tints, the hues, the outlines, the proportions, the grandeur, and even the softness of beauty; but these have the character that marks the existence of a soul. The effect is to pour a flood of sensations on the mind, that are distinct from the commoner feelings of wonder that are excited by vastness and magnificence. The *refinement* of Italian nature appears to distinguish it as much from that of other countries, as the quality distinguishes the scene of sentiment and intellect from the man of mere interests. In sublimity of a certain sort—more especially in the sublimity of desolation, Switzerland probably has no equal on earth; and perhaps to this may be added a certain unearthly aspect which the glaciers assume in particular conditions of the atmosphere; but these Italian scenes rise to a sublimity of a different kind, which, though it does not awe, leaves behind it a tender sensation allied to that of love. I can conceive even an ardent admirer of nature wearying in time of the grandeur of the Alps; but I can scarce imagine one who could ever tire of the witchery of Italy."—C. F. Cooper; "Excursions in Italy." Vol. I.; Letter XIV.

From the height of Ravello we gazed on a wide and various panorama of vale and mountain, spread in picturesque and infinite variety around; deep below was a sunny beach, shut in by steep headlands, and a placid, wide-spread southern sea, basking in the noontide heat. The cathedral of Ravello is an ancient, venerable edifice. In the sacristy were some old paintings of what may be called the scraphic school, such as I had admired at Florence. Saints, whose countenances show that they are blessed; virgins, whose gentleness is full of majesty, whose humility is that of one who, placing herself last, shall be first. Since those days men have lost the power of portraying the passion of adoration in the countenance. Either in venerable age or beautiful youth, what specimens there are in the first painters of great and good beings absorbed by grateful, joyful worship of the greatest and best of all. One of the most charming of the pictures at Ravello was an Annunciation;—the beaming sweetness of the angel, the chaste joy of Mary, spread a halo over the canvas. They told us that an Englishman had wished to buy these pictures, but the Bishop had very properly refused to commit the sacrilege of selling them.

The unclouded sun shone hotly above; there was a breeze, however, and the landscape showed green

and fresh. Sometimes our numerous party were clamorous among one another, disputing how their pay should be shared; when the confusion grew high, our old guide—sovereign over all in his own conceit—cried, “*Silenzio! silenzio!*” in an authoritative voice, and the stream of sound was, for a moment, checked. They were all well-behaved towards us. We asked our good-natured sbirri, with their harmless guns, whether there were any banditti now in Calabria? All, they assured us, was safe and quiet; or if there was any disturbance, they were sent, and order was restored—by what means I cannot guess, except that the aspects of these men were peculiarly placid and peaceful.

The descent was very precipitous, much of it being down flight after flight of steep steps, cut in the rock. It was far too warm and fatiguing to think of walking, and rather frightful to be carried down. However, by turning the chair, and riding backwards, we got through it without much alarm.

The Ponente had risen as we reached the beach. The sea sparkled fresh and free. The boat was large and commodious. The master-boatman had a great sense of his own respectability and that of his sons, and of the excellence of his vessel. He spoke his own praises in a sonorous voice, keeping time to his speech with the strokes of his oar:—

“ Sarete contenti di me, Signori. Io sono un’ galant’ uomo : mici figli sono galant’ uomini : la mia barca è buona e bella. Tutti i Signori forestieri sono contenti di me.” .

As soon as we had made something of an offing, the sails were set, and we changed our marinaro’s rhapsody of self-culogy to some national airs sung by his sons. Their voices were good, and our navigation was prosperous and pleasant.

We were thoroughly tired out when we arrived at Salerno, which is less picturesquely situated than Amalfi, the shore around being low. When Amalfi was a great commercial sea-port, the medical school of Salerno was famous for its knowledge of the healing art. The students went to study in Arabia and Spain ; and they returned to their native town to dispense, among crowds of rich and noble patients, the treasures of their skill. Salerno in those days was regarded as illustrious among the cities of modern Italy—the women were beautiful, and the men were honest ; thus Gibbon transcribes the praise of William of Apulia—

“ *Urbs Latii non est hac delitiosior urbe :
Frugibus, arboribus, vinoque redundat ; et unde
Non tibi poma, nuces, non pulchra palatia desunt
Non species muliebris abest probitasque virorum.*”

But we saw less of the remnants of this magni-

ficence than even of Amalfi, for we arrived fatigued ; and after a few hours' repose and dinner, we set out in a carriage homewards. We drove through a beautiful valley towards Castelmare, between wooded hills. There is a very pretty hotel at Cava, where travellers often remain several weeks. I should prefer, however, the sea-shore at Amalfi. Castelmare is a busy town on the beach, in the very depth of the bay. Numbers of villas are scattered over the wooded sides of the mountains and through the shady valley. There is a good railroad to Naples : the distance, rather more than twenty miles, is performed in about an hour and a half. Castelmare is a more fashionable resort than Sorrento. The villas are more numerous and more elegant ; the rides more diversified ; the intercourse with the capital easier. It is not so well suited for a short stay, for the hotels are all in the midst of a noisy town ; and the villas, which let at a high price, can only be taken for the season—six, or at least, four months. On the other hand, for excursions on the sea, Sorrento is very far to be preferred. Castelmare, at the depth of the bay, affords only a small lake-like basin for boating. To view the shores, or visit the islands, east or west, you must first reach Sorrento or Naples. In the former, you seem happily placed,

as in a centre, to diverge at will in excursions on the water. Sorrento is in every way cheaper and more practicable for those who are not rich.

The road from Castelamare to Sorrento, about twenty miles, is excellent, constructed on the edge of the cliffs overhanging the sea. As we proceeded we gladly hailed our return to a familiar scene, and welcomed various glimpses of views which we looked on as peculiarly our own. We passed Vico—half-way—and then turning the shoulder of a headland, rattled down towards the populous plain of Sorrento—with its many villages, its orange gardens and sheltering hills—and reached our quiet hotel, where we were gladly welcomed. The Cocumella has become a home—it is a joy to return to our terrace, to breathe the fragrance of the orange-flowers—to see the calm sea spread out at our feet, as we look over the bay to Naples—while above us bends a sky—in whose pure depths ship-like clouds glide—and the moon hangs luminous, a pendant sphere of silver fire.

THE END.

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